PlayStation 3 · PlayStation Portable · PlayStation Network · PlayStation 2

PlayStation®

The Official Magazine

FEBRUARY 09

GAME OF THE YEAR AWARDS!

PlayStation - The Official Magazine Issue 16 (February 2009)

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

KILLZONE® 2

The best shooter you'll play in 2009 is HERE NOW!

EARN TROPHIES THE EASY WAY

Easiest games, top tips, and time-saving solutions

FALLOUT 3

Find EVERY Bobblehead
You won't get lost... GUARANTEED!

+ Street Fighter IV Exclusive Review
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Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

VIDEO GAME RENTALS
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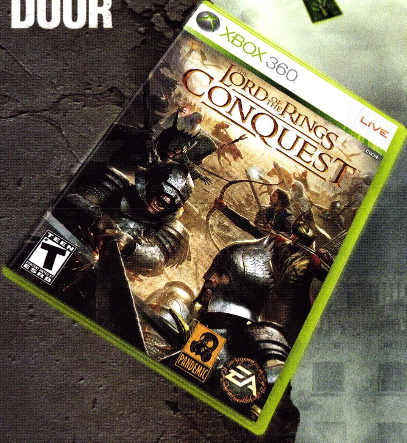
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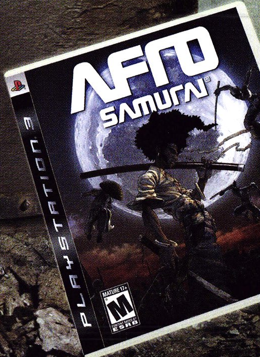
AFRO SAMURAI
PLAYSTATION 3
MATURE 17+ M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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February 2009

PlayStation The Official Magazine

☐ PlayStation 3 ■ PlayStation Portable ■ PlayStation Network ■ PlayStation 2

Helghan chicks dig the dark non-glowing eyes. It's just so...different.

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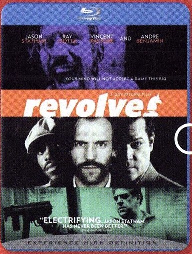
JASON STATHAM
RAY LIOTTA
VINCENT PASTORE AND ANDRE BENJAMIN
YOUR MIND WILL NOT ACCEPT A GAME THIS BIG
A GUY RITCHIE FILM
revolver
"ELECTRIFYING. JASON STATHAM HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER."
EXPERIENCE HIGH DEFINITION

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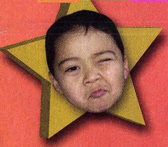
The TrumAn Show



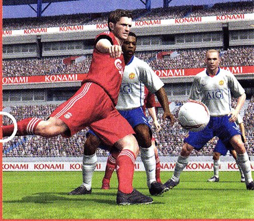
Life lesson from Truman: "Pain is the power of ninja! If *you* get hurt, that is the power of lose!"

I TRUST YOU WILL FIND EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER.
thunk
hissss
SONY
HOME
VOL
SELECT
START
POWER
HOLD

Something tells us this guy's gonna hold up the line at airport security.

Riddick can see in pitch black darkness, but Vin can't find one decent script in broad daylight?!

"This is pure snow! Do you have any idea what the street value of this mountain is?"



"Konami, Konami, Konami, Konami..." For some reason we can't stop saying "Konami."

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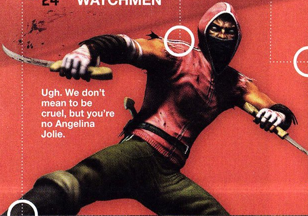
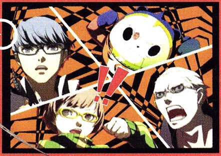
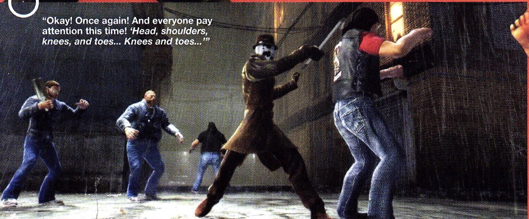


Ugh. We don't mean to be cruel, but you're no Angelina Jolie.

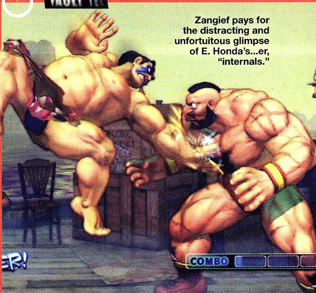


The trite love triangle dynamic was forever changed by the handsome, round newcomer.

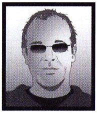
"Hi! I'm Bob."



"Okay! Once again! And everyone pay attention this time! *'Head, shoulders, knees, and toes... Knees and toes...'*"



Zangief pays for the distracting and unfortuitous glimpse of E. Honda's...er, "internals."

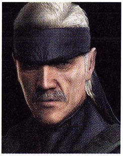


Editor's Note

"I loved when you gave me that cake, that was sweet. Did you make it yourself?"

Oh, it's a toughie this month (the quote contest that you really should enter, see the details below) but if you see the movie somehow, I'd love to hear your opinions. Maybe you'll be inspired to drop us an email after you see the newly extended Letters section (page 92). Possibly our Game of the Year awards coverage, starting on page 42, will so inflame or inspire you, you'll be forced to heap embarrassing praise or undue (and that was uncalled for) abuse into our mailbox. Perhaps The Truman Show (page 62) will tug at the heartstrings so tangibly you'll be compelled to regale us with your own stories. And if you've ever designed and uploaded a *LittleBigPlanet* level I know you'll be moved to typed words by our story about the famous Azure Palace on page 89.

I need to spell out the theme? I think not; it's about feedback. It's about your opinions, it's about your considerations, musings, rants, and regales of your experiences with your PlayStation 2 or 3, the Network, and the games. I've asked before, and we've run several of your comments, but it's time to get the great feedback program up and running and we guarantee we'll include the most insightful, informative, or just plain funny comments. It's easy to read the throwaway comments sections of news blogs that are even more immediately consigned to the great unimportant ether than even newspapers were back in the day when they became bird cage liners or chip butty wrappers (a nod to my English brethren…any of you out there?) In print your comments will live forever, so isn't it about time you contributed your considered opinions? Or just tune back next month, see what the early adopters have to say, then respond to them. The floor, as the politicians might say, is yours.



> "It's the weekend following Thanksgiving and nine… NINE…emails pop in the PTOM Letters Inbox over the course of an hour."

Now is the time. Did you see Sony's holiday period TV commercials? Were you as confused and disappointed as I was? Or enthused and invigorated? Did you persuade friends and relatives to join the PS3 revolution for the games, the Network functions, the Blu-ray capabilities, the combination of all of the above?

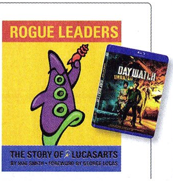
Saturday, November 29th 2008. Early morning. It's the weekend following Thanksgiving and nine…NINE…emails pop in the PTOM Letters Inbox over the course of an hour. Each one has its own distinct subject line. Each has its own considered opinion, comment, or question. All were typed by one Jason Rhoades who wanted to talk to us about a bunch of topics. Well, we've printed all nine of the letters, and they're on page 93, complete with the best answers we could muster before press time. Jason, I'm thrilled you didn't have anything better to do on a Thanksgiving weekend morning, but consider yourself rewarded with junk from my desk in recognition of the time you took to pen thoughtful and thought-provoking treatises on the state of PlayStation gaming.

Be like Jason. Just email **PTOM_Letters@futureus.com** and you could be featured in these pages, win fabulous prizes, and be the envy of friends and the target of super-hot, intelligent, interesting ladies the world over. Guaranteed.

Rob

"Quote" contest

Did anyone not spot the line from the classic Hitchcock thriller, *Psycho?* Of all the correct entries, Conrad Camu of Ridgewood, NY was the lucky first out of the hat, and wins a Blu-ray movie of my choice plus…oh yes, PLUS…a copy of my book, *Rogue Leaders: The Story of LucasArts* (available in good bookstores everywhere, or via www.chroniclebooks.com).



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E-T 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

COLLECTOR'S EDITIONS

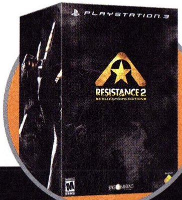
SUBSTANCE OR GIMMICK?

Games. You love 'em, you play 'em. You wouldn't be reading this if you didn't. So most likely, you buy games. The question is, which version do you buy: the standalone or the collector's edition? If you buy the game solo, you know what you're getting for your money (assuming you paid attention to our reviews!), but with a special edition, you're just never 100-percent sure of what you're getting for those 10, 20, or 30 extra bucks. So we picked up the Collector's Editions of some recent eagerly-anticipated games and broke them down to see what you get for your money.

Resistance 2 Collector's Edition

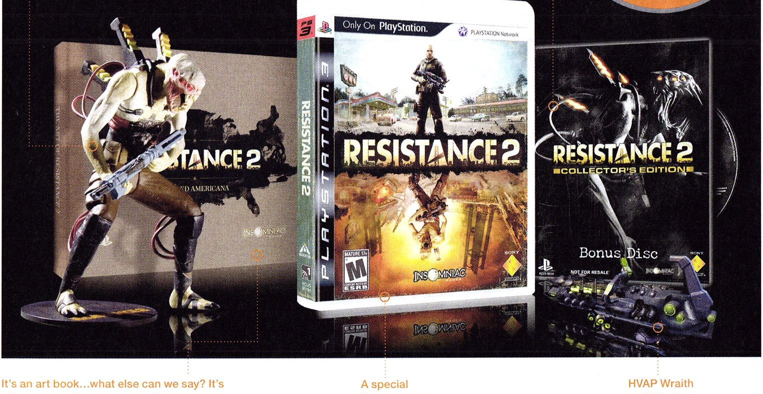
PRICE: **$79.99** CURRENT AVAILABILITY: **$69.99 ON GAMESTOP.COM; $59.96 AT AMAZON.COM**

Worth It? Absolutely, considering you can find the Collector's Edition for cheaper than the normal edition. (How'd that happen?) But if you have to pay the full 20 bucks extra, the CE's value depends on how much you like toys and pictures. A high quality collection overall, but at full price, we'd skip it.


PLAYSTATION 3
RESISTANCE 2
COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Exclusive 5-inch Chimera Hybrid action figure holding a Bullseye weapon. Perfect as a desk ornament.

A DVD with the typical behind-the-scenes and timeline segments. Nice bonuses include the first issue of the *Resistance* comic book series and a preview of the *Resistance* novel by William Dietz.


RESISTANCE 2
AMERICANA
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PLAYSTATION Network
PLAYSTATION 3
RESISTANCE 2
RESISTANCE 2
COLLECTOR'S EDITION
Bonus Disc
NOT FOR RESALE

It's an art book...what else can we say? It's a hardcover with concept and in-game art. Nice for people who like to look at pictures.

A special fan-selected box cover.

HVAP Wraith multiplayer weapon skin

Hard to find CE goodies

Mirror's Edge Runner's Bag

Rumor has it that only 200 of these vivid red bags were made. It was initially included as part of a $129.99 *Mirror's Edge* pre-order bundle on the EA Store, but has since disappeared. Made by Timbuk2, a close-up of Faith stares back at you when you open up the bag. Not to be confused with GameStop's pre-order *Mirror's Edge* special: a bright yellow bag (and not as nice or nearly as rare). If you're lucky, you'll find a listing for both bags on eBay.

Valkyria Chronicle's Alicia Figurine and Edelweiss Tank

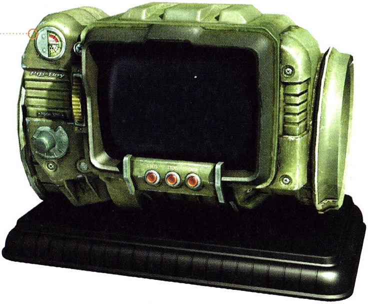
These decorative figurines were only included in the Japanese limited edition of the game and never sold in the U.S., so you'll be hard-pressed to find them here. The Japanese package also came with a limited edition art book, too. Fans of the game should head to eBay to see if they can secure themselves some of these uber-rare miniatures.

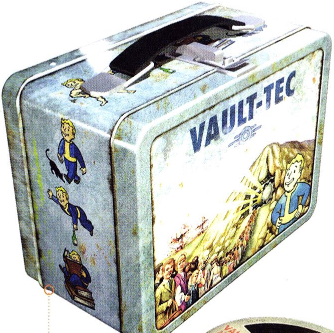
Fallout 3 Collector's Edition

PRICE: **$79.99** CURRENT AVAILABILITY: **$67.99 ON AMAZON.COM; $70 OR MORE ON EBAY**

Worth It? Twenty bucks for a bobblehead toy and a lunchbox? Sane non-gamers would probably say it's a terrible deal. But we beg to differ. It's a Vault Boy bobblehead and a Vault Tec lunchbox. So yes, of course it's worth it! The Survival Edition, on the other hand, is a luxury that's out of our price range.

There's the *Fallout 3* Collector's Edition, and then there's the *Fallout 3* Survival Edition, an Amazon.com exclusive. For $119.99, you get everything in the CE, but also a life-size Pip-Boy 3000 replica that's a functioning digital clock. It's a neat idea, with a couple of working knobs and lights (and a compass!) and we love that it has practical use, but is it worth the 50 extra bucks you'll be paying? Probably not…unless you're planning a *Fallout 3* Vault costume for Halloween 2009. In that case, hell yes. And send pictures.

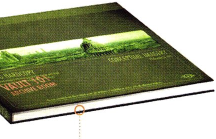




Useful for storing office supplies, candy, games, or photographs. A little too small to be convenient as an actual lunch box, though we wish it had been around when we were younger. We would've been the coolest kids in town.

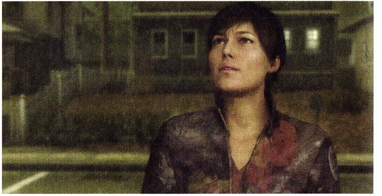
VAULT 101 ARCHIVE ROOM
MAKING OF FALLOUT 3
HISTORICAL SERIES
VDSG HOLOTAPE
MAKING OF FALLOUT 3

The Making of Fallout 3 DVD…typical Collector's Edition fare. Let us know if you actually watch these things.



An art book consisting mostly of concepts and sketches. Like most art books, it's worth flipping through, but not worth paying for…unless you're an artist, of course.

Vault Boy Bobblehead, enough said. A must-have. Must-have, you hear! And yes, the head really bobbles!



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION INTERVIEW

DAVID CAGE

Aniticipation for *Heavy Rain* runs high, but details remain scarce. We seek answers.

Paris-based developer Quantic Dreams boasts a lean two games to its credit from its 11-plus years in existence. The first, *Omikron: The Nomad Soul* for Eidos was notable for its inventive storytelling, and its use of David Bowie. The second, *Indigo Prophecy* (called *Fahrenheit* in Europe) earned rave reviews for its creative story-driven approach. Alongside its motion capture facilities (which have been used by other film and game companies), Quantic's cinematic flair has always been on the leading edge of true gaming innovation. *Heavy Rain* is the company's next grand project, and teased all who saw it at E3 last year for its unique, open-ended story and gameplay devices. While still keeping many cards close to his chest, we sat down with Quantic CEO David Cage to find out the inspirations and expectations of this new grand vision.

PTOM: What we saw at E3 last year—a woman hiding in a taxidermist's house, going through rooms, then hiding when he returned home—was very elaborate, but you've said it's not actually in the game, but a sandbox to illustrate the potential of the system you're building. Is that actually true? It looks like a pretty full-featured setup to be "just" a proof of concept.

DC: It's not a part of the game. It's to show the technology, the interface, the philosophy behind *Heavy Rain,* but it's just not the story. Initially Sony asked us to create a slice—one scene to illustrate some of the key aspects of the gameplay. It was never supposed to leave Sony and Quantic, but they thought it was good, and it did help answer the usual questions, "Yeah, but how did it play?" So instead of having long answers, we could just show it.

The scale of what you personally produced for this game—some 20,000 pages of detail and content—is staggering. But how much do you expect me as the player to see of that? Do you expect multiple playthroughs in order for us to see all you've created?

Honestly, the way I expect people to play the game is in one playthrough, to play their story, and this will be unique depending on what they've done and how they've played. I wouldn't really like people to go back and try every single thing and fail on purpose to see what would happen. I think that would not be the right way to play it, but I'm sure a lot of people will, and that's fine. Just play it and see your story.

The environments? Cinematic and beautifully detailed. But what you discover and experience in *Heavy Rain* is still a mystery.

So you're cool with the thought of creating all this content that won't be witnessed or experienced?

Yes, but you've got to be clear on what you want to create with this experience. Or you can create a linear story that everyone sees, but that's called a movie. Or you create non-linearity, and branches that some will see and some will miss. Like in real life, you never know what happens down the other branches.

You have mentioned a movie script for this project?

Yes, I worked on a movie script in parallel to the game design. Initially it was just an exercise to see what the difference would be, and see if I could improve the quality of the game script by having a clear understanding of what the movie script would be. I really learned a lot, and working on the movie script really made me change things in the game. Now it seems there's some interest around the script of the movie… but my focus is on the game.

You used a multiple rubber band intertwining the story arcs to illustrate how the game situations intersect. How do you organize that into a cohesive design?

Well, it's very difficult to get all the pieces together, which is why a game like this takes so much time. You want several "best" stories, because you don't want one branch to have the best parts, and other branches weaker. You want them all to be the same quality. So you need a strong idea for the gameplay in every single scene, so that it's contextual to what's going on in the scene. It's technical to write to keep a structure, organization, and not lose a thread. It's quite an interesting exercise!

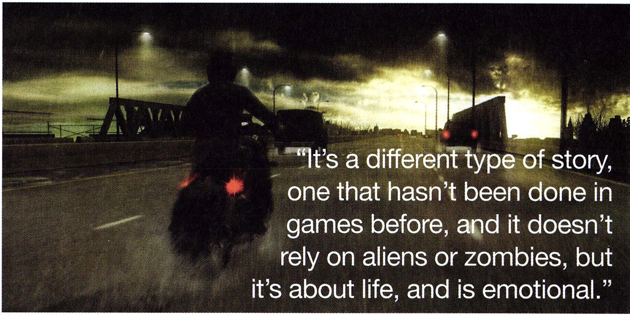
At the end of the day, it's still a game. A gamer will hear about the adult style, ambitious nature, but it also showed interesting game mechanics, using the Sixaxis, etc. How do you manage to blend telling these stories with still introducing the game mechanics to a new player?

First, we tried to get the interface as simple as possible, no elaborate multiple combinations of button presses, unless it makes sense for the game. So in the taxidermist level where the girl hides behind the door, she's in an uncomfortable position so we want the player to be in an uncomfortable position with the controller. But at the same time we're not doing an RPG, with skills and points. Within minutes we hope people will forget the interface, because it's about what you do, what you think, not how you control it. Certainly with the way you interact with the environment, where you use the Left stick, not a button, we need to teach people how to navigate.

I was thinking about how in *Indigo Prophecy* I did it in a tutorial that was totally separate from the story because I didn't want to bring the story into that learning process. With *Heavy Rain* we've found a slightly different solution,

David Cage 411

FAVORITE MOVIE: Impossible! Probably 20 I could mention: Hitchcock, *Citizen Kane, Brazil, Fight Club, Silence of the Lambs.*
FAVORITE PAINTING: I like sculptures a lot, but Rauschenberg, Magritte, and surreal pieces like Picasso.
PIECE OF MUSIC: Radiohead, U2 (but that's because I'm old), although musician was my former job (and I have to mention David Bowie).
COMICS: Alan Moore, incredibly talented guy.
BEDSIDE BOOK RIGHT NOW: It's about physics and biology. I love science, and interested in recent discoveries about genes. And Jared Diamond, who did an interesting book on why certain societies succeed [called *Collapse*]. And I'm a BIG fan of *The Selfish Gene*, by Richard Dawkins. It's the bible of the 21st century.



> "It's a different type of story, one that hasn't been done in games before, and it doesn't rely on aliens or zombies, but it's about life, and is emotional."

The beautiful investigative journalist from *Heavy Rain's* E3 demo rides off into the sunset. Apparently, never to return.

where the tutorial is done in a certain way that introduces you to the story and the game at the same time. It seems to be more consistent.

How about the title? *Heavy Rain*...and every scene we've witnessed, it appears to be raining.

Well, it takes place on the east coast of the U.S. in autumn, and it does rain in the game most of the time. In fact, rain is more than just a background, but plays a very important role. What I can say is that it's a different type of story, one that hasn't been done in games before, and it doesn't rely on aliens or zombies, but it's about life, and is emotional.

Has the story evolved over time since you started work on it, through feedback from the team or working out how the gameplay would fit with your plans?

No, in a title like this there are pieces you can iterate and reassess, but there are elements of the core essence that couldn't change. There's also part of the huge machinery of getting a production like this completed. To create all these assets, to shoot all this mo-cap, you can't just say "oh, I like this idea now..." because everyone on the team is going to kill you! So I make sure I love the story enough to keep me excited for three years.

When was the writing finished?

That was done last year [2007] but we've been in full production since January...This is a game with high expectations in terms of gameplay and ambition, and not something that can be produced in a sweatshop. Everything is about consistency, so you need every person on the team to know how a piece fits into the scene, what it means. Even with outsourcing—people that are a sweat shop, where you send them stuff and just expect it to come back better—we spent a lot of time showing them details, showing them the sets, telling them the story, who the characters are, to vest them. And it was very successful. We didn't just use them as low-cost labor, but showed them what their work would mean, where it takes place in the story, and it really changes the relationship and also the results you get.

You've mentioned that the moral decisions, the emotion of the game, will tell a story of the player themselves.

Yes, it's about asking questions of the player that are not easy to answer. Not just do you want to be nice, or evil, and know there are no consequences. But in daily life, decisions are grey, and I was looking to ask difficult questions. And this is the most challenging, exciting, and interesting part of the project, creating moments where a simple action can have huge consequences. For example, let's imagine you have to kill someone, and you have a very good reason, in most games it's just *kapow* you're dead. If we manage to create this moment where you're supposed to kill someone but the decision is difficult, and you may choose not to do it, then we've accomplished something.

Any other examples like that in the emotional relationships?

Certainly, building relationships with other characters is extremely interesting. And I've bet a lot in *Heavy Rain* that we've created that connection with NPCs, in a way that hasn't been done before.

With the technology and game building, how do you make those characters sufficiently believable?

That's a major difficulty. If they move like robots, or act stupid, you'll never have this suspension of disbelief. You'll always see them as a program, a bunch of pixels on screen. But we're trying to create a situation where you might think you'd hurt someone's feelings if you didn't behave a certain way, where you really feel something for these other characters. If we manage to achieve that, it will be very rewarding, even if the rest of the game is terrible, I'd be happy!

Maybe for a project down the line, have you considered other methods of interfacing with the game world? The controller is still an analog format, but do options using, say, the PlayStation Eye make sense?

Yes, we felt the controller was a barrier for many people, so we looked at different interfaces based on movements, but I just end up thinking that if you want to experience *Heavy Rain,* you don't want to gesticulate on your couch! That may be fun for certain games, but it's not the way to go for us right now.

As a PlayStation 3 exclusive you've said it makes your life easier to focus on the one hardware platform, but what did Sony see in it to sign your idea up?

Well, they thought it was unique, and they thought it could be a platform-defining experience. No one else in the world is working on a similar concept. And we were serious about emotion, but not just having characters smile when they succeed or cry when they fail; it was about attracting a different audience, adults that would make decisions.

PlayStation Digest

Top Stories, Industry Bits, and Oddities

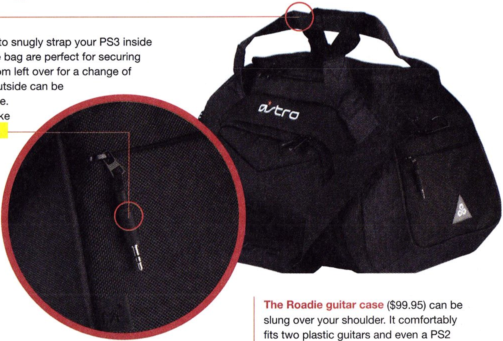
HARDWARE: IT MAKES YOUR LIFE EASIER

Nifty accessories and peripherals to simplify, beautify, and add utility to your PlayStation life. This month? Graspable bags and a round-up of controller charging devices.

Astro's Gaming Transport Series

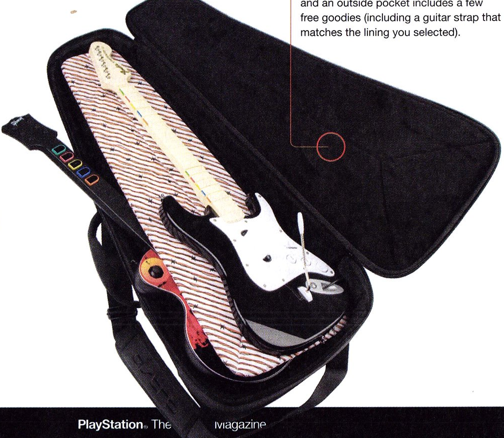
The Mission carrying case ($129.95) allows you to snugly strap your PS3 inside the bottom of the bag. Additional straps inside the bag are perfect for securing cables and controllers, and there's still enough room left over for a change of clothes and a toothbrush. Three pockets on the outside can be used to store games, a passport, or pocket change.

But it's the attention to the little things that make us swoon. The logos, **the zipper-that's-a-jack,** and the rich, luxurious lining are nerd details we appreciate, while the plush handles, multiple pockets and compartments, hands-free carrying straps, and durable material give the bags a practical edge, perfect as carry-on luggage. Finally, a gaming product we're not ashamed to use in public!



The perfect blend of subtle gamer style and ultimate functionality. That's Astro's philosophy with all of its products including their signature professional-grade gaming headphones, the **A40 Audio System** ($249.95). Heavenly sound, and so perfect for gaming.

The Roadie guitar case ($99.95) can be slung over your shoulder. It comfortably fits two plastic guitars and even a PS2 slim. You get to pick the lining pattern, and an outside pocket includes a few free goodies (including a guitar strap that matches the lining you selected).



Sony's AC Adapter

If you're looking for an all-in-one PlayStation charger, consider Sony's new **AC Adapter** ($24.99), which provides two USB outlets for charging PS3 controllers, Bluetooth headsets, the upcoming Wireless Keypad, and even your PSP-2000 and PSP-3000. Handy, considering the new PS3 models only come with two USB ports.

Nyko's Charge Base 2

While not the most attractive of chargers, the **Charge Base 2** ($29.99) is functional and simple. It's wireless, like the Psyclone TouchCharge Kit, so you just have to attach a small adapter and place the controller on to the charging port. It'll charge two controllers. One downside we noticed: those red and green lights are bright. Nightlight bright. But at least you won't trip when you have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, right?

Psyclone's TouchCharge Kit

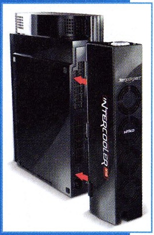
Depending on your definition of sexy, you'll either drool over the **TouchCharge Kit** ($49.99) and its futuristic, cyber-slick design or detest it. We're mixed. It's a PS3 controller charger—useful for those who find the USB cable that comes packaged with their PS3 inconvenient, or those who wish to charge from a distance—that looks like a shiny, metallic, half-sized mouse pad. Clamp a small adapter onto your DualShock 3 or Sixaxis and plop the controller onto the charging pad. Voila. Like magic, your controller will be wirelessly charged. You can pick up your controller at any time to use, just note that the adapter adds a bit of heft. The TouchCharge Kit comes with two adapters and enough room on the pad to fit two controllers.

NOT A FAN

Nyko's Intercooler TS

We're generally pleased with the design, quality, and functionality of Nyko products, but the Intercooler TS is a misstep for the usually reliable company.

In theory, the Intercooler is a $34.99 insurance policy that protects your PS3 from potential damage caused by overheating. In practice, both Teresa and Scott were unable to successfully attach the unit to a PS3. Roger stepped in with his additional years of experience (and manly good looks) to complete the installation, but it promptly fell off after a slight bump. Once gingerly in place, the Intercooler TS does indeed cool your PS3, but is there a real need for the device since the console doesn't have a reputation for overheating?



Additional irritations include the lack of a physical on/off switch (the Intercooler "monitors" itself) and the fact that a horizontally oriented PS3 can't even lie flat once the unit is installed. C'mon Nyko, did you even look at a PS3 before shipping this design travesty?

PlayStation Digest

GT dev makes a car

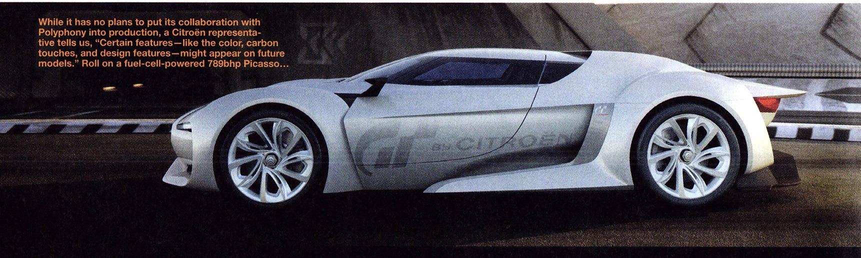
Polyphony collaborates with Citroën on 789bhp concept

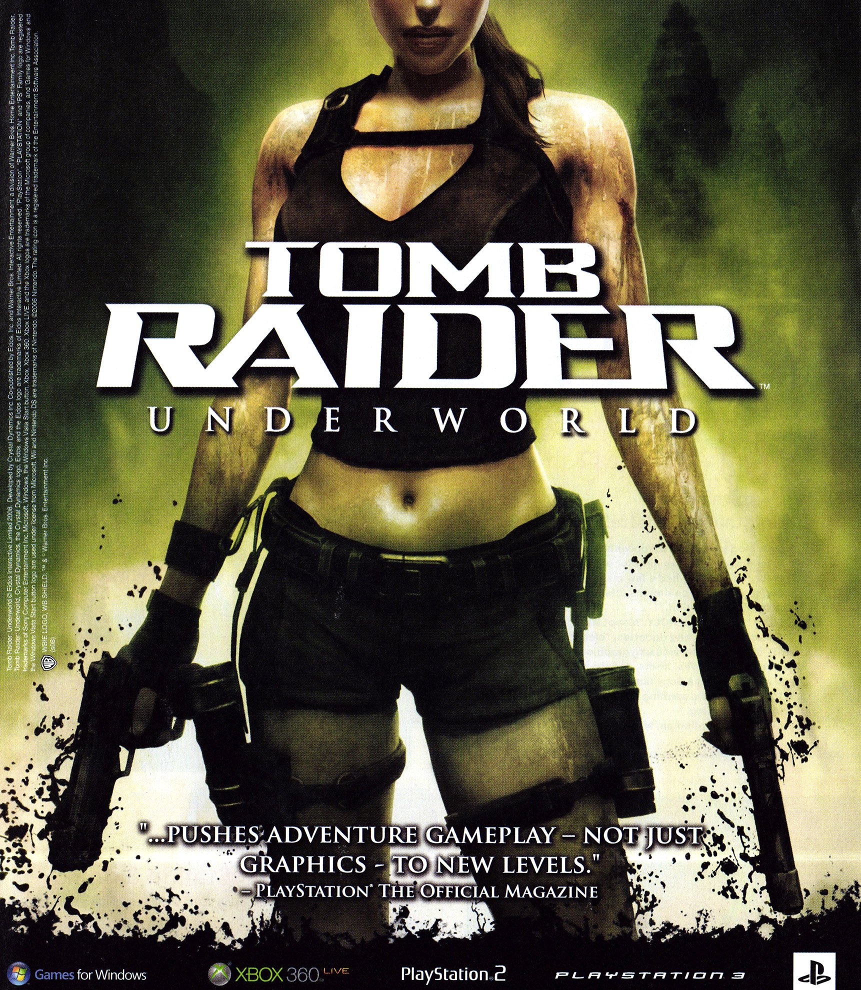
It was only a matter of time before *Gran Turismo* developer Polyphony Digital crossed the line between fastidiously recreating other people's cars and designing its own. Unveiled at the Paris Motor Show, this mid-engined, two-seater concept coupe is a working replica of an original car now available for download as part of *GT5 Prologue's Spec III* update. The project is a collaboration between Polyphony boss Kazunori Yamauchi and childhood friend, Takumi Yamamoto, who happens to work on the Style Citroën design team.

Saxo appeal

Designed in just nine months, the GTbyCitroën marshals four fuel cells to deliver a mighty 789bhp and has a stealth bomber-style rear conceived specifically to gives gamers maximum visual drama as they play. Kaz is clearly delighted by the results. "To see the car take shape in-game and then for real has been a truly unique experience as our work normally stays in the digital world. I just hope I can get behind the wheel and drive it on a real race track!"

Drive the GTbyCitroën now by downloading the latest version of *GT5 Prologue Spec III* from the Store


While it has no plans to put its collaboration with Polyphony into production, a Citroën representative tells us, "Certain features—like the color, carbon touches, and design features—might appear on future models." Roll on a fuel-cell-powered 789bhp Picasso...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CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
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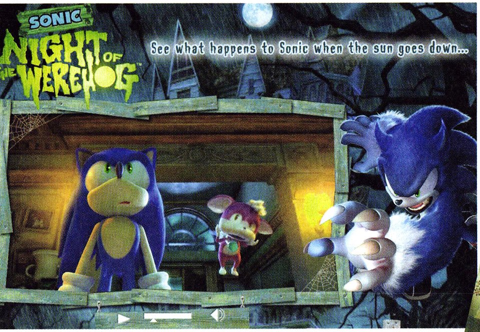
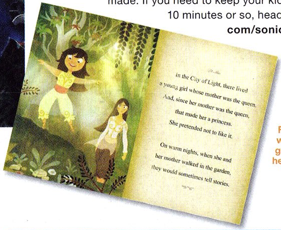


Highlights from Offical Game Websites

Two online freebies for your indulgence:

A *Prince of Persia* online comic—a joint creation by the *Prince of Persia* team and Penny Arcade—is now available online. The story features a young Elika along with a soft, highly stylized art treatment. Go to **http://prince-of-persia.us.ubi.com/** to access the book.

A short online film about Sonic the Werehog is now available. It's a bit of charming silliness with little substance, but it's well made. If you need to keep your kids entertained for 10 minutes or so, head to **www.sega.com/sonicunleashed/notw/us/** to check out *Sonic: Night of the Werehog.*



In the City of Light, there lived a young girl whose mother was the queen. And, since her mother was the queen, that made her a princess. She pretended not to like it.

On warm nights, when she and her mother walked in the garden, they would sometimes tell stories.

Find out what Elika was up to before she grew up and found her charming Prince.

GOD OF WAR III

Tell us what you *really* think, Mr. Jaffe!

In his blog (criminalcrackdown.blogspot.com), David Jaffe (the director of *God of War* and *GoW II)* had a few insightful, thought-provoking comments after seeing *God of War III* in action.

First: "HOLY HOLY HOLY *bleep* HELL!!!!"

Second: "Dudes and dudettes, *bleep* WAIT till you see the amazing graphics...just *bleep* wait. And yes, Xbots, accuse me all you want of being a Sony fanboy...*bleep* YOU! It looks like a painting come to life—it's THAT good looking."

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Jaffe.

Too bad we're already in debt

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4417 1234 5678 9112
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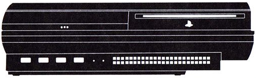
Introductory offers? APR? Interest what's-its? We don't care. All that stuff changes from week to week anyway, it seems. All we know is, that Visa card has PlayStation pride stamped all over it. We want one. We may never use it, but it'd look so sweet and pretty framed in our cubicles. Go to **www.sony.com/getpscard** if you want the dull but painfully important details.

On the PlayStation Beat

If once-a-month issues of PTOM and once-a-month episodes of Qore just aren't enough for you, check out the new biweekly program on Playstation.com, Pulse, which expounds on the latest PlayStation Store releases. Go to **www.us.playstation.com/PSN** to check it out.

PLAYSTATION® Network



How well is PlayStation 3 doing?

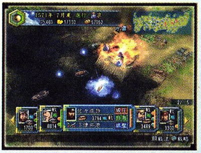
Steady improvement, we'd say, looking at the worldwide hardware sales.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Fiscal Year
FY2006	—	—	1.68	1.93	3.61
FY2007	0.71	1.31	4.90	2.33	9.24
FY2008	1.56	2.43	—	—	—

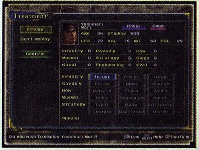
Note: Units are in millions. Fiscal year ends March 31.

koei
www.koei.com

AMBITION BECOMES REALITY



EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY, GOVERN WISELY, AND BUILD A MILITARY FORCE FOR WAR ON LAND AND AT SEA.



Treatment

Employ
Don't employ
Confirm

Yoshinari Mori — Ronin — Good

Age 34 Stipend 500

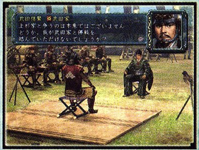
LEA 72 VAL 75 INT 60 POL 29

Infantry	B	Cavalry	D	Bow	D
Musket	C	Strategy	D	Siege	D
Naval	D	Engineering	C	Civil	D

Infantry: Thrust
Cavalry
Bow
Musket
Strategy
Special

Do you wish to employ Yoshinari Mori?

DEVELOP 80 DIFFERENT KINDS OF CRAFTS, SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO ADVANCE YOUR DOMAIN AND SUBJUGATE THE ENEMY.



武田信繁　武田家
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どうか、我が武田家と停戦を
結んでいただけないでしょうか？

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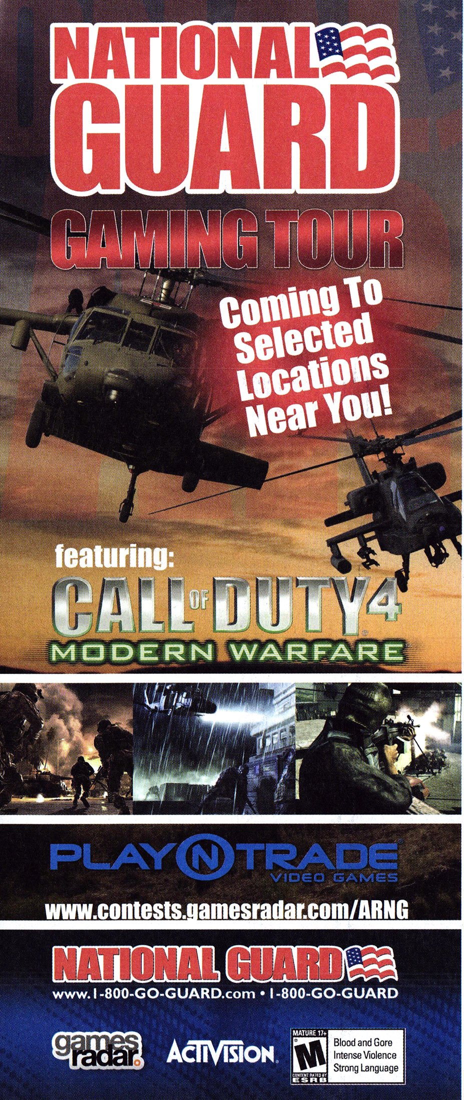

TOP10LIST

What we're consuming, playing, watching, and listening to this month. So much stuff, so little money...

2009 Audi S4 | **Automobile** | **$55,000 (est.)**
Once upon a time, before Roger had two kids, he cruised in style in an Imola Yellow 2001 S4 Avant. Audi's latest interpretation of the S4 has Roger swooning all over again, but "necessities" like paying the mortgage and feeding his kids stand in the way of his newly enflamed car lust. Of course, Top 10 List entries sometimes miraculously appear at PTOM Towers after they appear in the mag… Okay, it was a can of nuts—once. But perhaps?

Umbro Official England Home Long Sleeve Jersey | **Clothes** | **$54.99**
The future looks bright for merry old England under the direction of Fabio Capello and besides, Ken needs a white jersey. Way to go, Ken, the U.S. economy is in shambles and you're sending money to Europe instead of supporting an *American* sport. God save the Queen, mate!

DEAD KENNEDYS

Dead Kennedys track pack | **Rock Band DLC** | **$5.49**
It's no secret that Scott loves *Rock Band.* And if you've been paying attention, you may have noticed that he also loves punk rock. So when you put three of the most memorable (and controversial) songs from the Bay Area's finest hardcore band in the game, guess what? Yeah, that's right, he *loves* it. Now that's a whole lotta love.

Fenestra Winery | **Wine** | **$10.50 and up**
The Livermore valley is still a small, but long-serving member of the Nor Cal wine-growing scene with some 40-plus wineries. One of Rob's favorites is the unpretentious Fenestra (www.fenestrawinery.com)—a big, whitewashed, low-rent warehouse-cum-tasting room that endears a casual approach to the wines, and the free tastings let you sample a range of Sauv Blancs via Verdelho to Zins and a sensational 2002 Estate Syrah, most of which was lost in a warehouse fire. That's Rob's way of saying he's smarter and more cultured than you.

Personal Computers | **PC** | **Varies**
With several generations of PlayStation gaming, writing, and editing under his belt, Gary decided it was time for a change—a return to his roots, if you will. That's why he's packing up and heading over to sister-mag *PC Gamer* to be its next Editor-in-Chief. In preparation, he's been flexing his index finger all cycle, getting it back into shape to click *Diablo* to death once again. But he can't seem to figure out where the Floppy Disk slot is these days.

SURFIN' BIRD

Surfin' Bird by The Trashmen | **Music** | **$.99 on iTunes**
Possibly the catchiest song ever...according to Teresa, who had never even heard of it until she stumbled upon a *Family Guy* snippet on YouTube. But now that the funky melody has infiltrated Teresa's ears, the pap-oom-mow-mow rhythm cycles endlessly through her head. We catch her sometimes, mouthing the song to herself.

Owen | **Music** | **$9**
No, it's not some guy named Owen, it's some guy named Mike Kinsella who wanted to avoid being labeled a singer-songwriter and took the pseudonym as a means of preventing that. But inane nomenclature aside, Owen makes some terribly pretty, melancholy music that's had Scott hooked all month. Pick up *At Home With Owen* for those reflective moments between rounds in *Resistance 2.*

Spenco PolySorb Total Support Insoles | **Healthcare** | **$34.99**
You wouldn't drive around on flat tires, would you? Well, when Ken's high-mileage soccer-playing feet had a breakdown recently (thanks, Plantar Fasciitis!) these insoles are what got him back on the pitch again. Love your feet. Pamper your feet. They're always hanging out at the end of your legs supporting you.

Padma Lakshmi | **Delicious** | **Priceless**
Married couples know all about The List. Those five names that you would if you could, free and clear. For Gary, there is only one name, five times over (and under, and left, and right…so wrong). That name is Padma Lakshmi, the international model, foodie, and spicy host of *Top Chef.* Yum.

iPhone 3G | **Cell Phone/Gadget** | **$199 to $299**
The gear watch is on: how long can Roger hold out before he finally succumbs and buys an iPhone 3G? He's not sure he really needs it, and his cell phone bill will go up, but he wants it… Yes, he does, my precious. Of course, there's no getting around the fact that he'll have to pick one up for the wife as well. But at least it's cheaper than an Audi S4.

↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ← → ← → B A START

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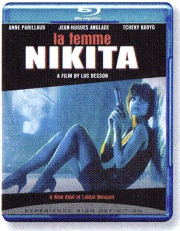
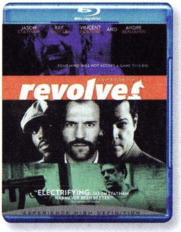
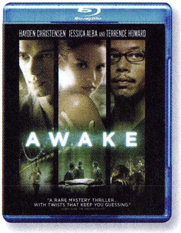
Blu-ray Central

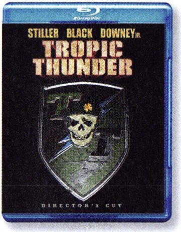
Watch these when you're alone on Valentine's Day

The last and most anticipated of the summer blockbusters leads us off this month, along with action movies from Russia, France, and England, the country formally known as Rob Smith's homeland. Guess which one sucks the most?


Blu-ray Disc
ANNE PARILLAUD
JEAN-HUGUES ANGLADE
TCHEKY KARYO
la femme NIKITA
A FILM BY LUC BESSON
A New Kind of Lethal Weapon
EXPERIENCE HIGH DEFINITION


Blu-ray Disc
JASON STATHAM
RAY LIOTTA
VINCENT PASTORE
AND ANDRE BENJAMIN
YOUR MIND WILL NOT ACCEPT A GAME THIS BIG
revolver
"ELECTRIFYING. JASON STATHAM HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER!"
EXPERIENCE HIGH DEFINITION


Blu-ray Disc
HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN JESSICA ALBA AND TERRENCE HOWARD
AWAKE
"A RARE MYSTERY THRILLER... WITH TWISTS THAT KEEP YOU GUESSING"


Blu-ray Disc
STILLER BLACK DOWNEY JR.
TROPIC THUNDER
DIRECTOR'S CUT

La Femme Nikita

PRICE: $28.95 **RATED:** R

| MOVIE | Luc Besson doesn't direct anymore. That's a shame since Besson's movies were terrific for the most part; so while Uwe Boll limps on, artistic and engaging action flicks like *La Femme Nikita* now form footnotes in our movie culture history. The film, which is distinctly French in the best possible way, is still a marker for intense action and intriguing characters. If you've only seen the awful American remake—*Point of No Return*—you've cheated yourself out of a movie that defined a new sense of style for action movies and took the genre away from the trappings of tired U.S. offerings and John Woo retreads.

| EXTRAS | None, zip, nilch. Life is so unfair.

MOVIE ★★★★
EXTRAS

Revolver

PRICE: $28.95 **RATED:** R

| MOVIE | We can only hope that the post-Madonna Guy Richie recaptures the artistry of the Pre-Madonna version. *Revolver,* however, is definitely in the dark middle period. Though elements of the great action and criminal characterizations from *Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels* exist here, it's almost completely muddled by forced and failed attempts at coolness and dribbling usage of dime-store philosophy concepts. By far the best part of the movie is the one sequence where the nerdy hit man is allowed to shine, but that's hardly enough to save this dud.

| EXTRAS | If you sat through *Revolver,* you should probably sit through the commentary to understand what the hell Ritchie and friends were thinking. Their ramblings go a long way to spelling out what they were attempting to do, even if they utterly failed.

MOVIE ★½
EXTRAS ★★½

Awake

PRICE: $28.95 **RATED:** R

| MOVIE | Surprisingly non-heinous, *Awake* is a movie that hints at real potential for its director, Joby Harold, even if this result is a partial victory at best. Hayden Christensen shows some actual acting chops here and Jessica Alba looks pretty, but where the movie succeeds is in effectively transferring a real sense of dread to the viewer over the horrifying concept of being awake—yet completely immobilized—during open heart surgery. The whole murder plot and climax of the third act is entirely suspect, but the movie is worth a rental for Hayden's internal struggle to not go insane.

| EXTRAS | The usual throwaway deleted and extended scenes and making of bits are okay, but the director's commentary is a perfect example of how not to do commentary. Harold essentially just relays the action on the screen while providing remarkably little insight to its creation.

MOVIE ★★★
EXTRAS ★★½

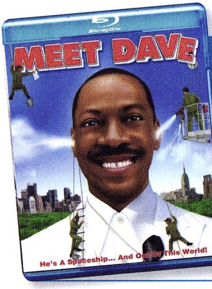
Tropic Thunder

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** R

| MOVIE | Mixing satire and parody, *Tropic Thunder* takes as many shots at Hollywood as it does war movies. Largely, it works fantastically well. While some jokes pancake, most of the movie is gut-splitting hilarious, and Tom Cruise just might have dragged his credibility out of the gutter for his shamelessly over-the-top portrayal of a studio-head asshole.

| EXTRAS | Plenty of goodies here, though the commentary tracks for the cast are disappointingly slow overall, but still worth checking out. The rest of the HD extras cover all the usual behind-the-scenes packages: deleted scenes, alternate ending, and extended sequences. The highlight is *Rain of Madness,* a fantastic parody of *Hearts of Darkness,* a documentary of *Apocalypse Now* that's arguably better than the actual movie.

MOVIE ★★★★
EXTRAS ★★★½


Blu-ray Disc
MEET DAVE
He's A Spaceship... And Out Of This World!

FAMILY NIGHT!

Meet Dave

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** PG

| MOVIE | The secret to enjoying Eddie Murphy movies is low expectations. Or in the case of the *Nutty Professor* movies, total denial of their existence. In the case of *Meet Dave,* however, we're reminded that Murphy is a remarkably good physical comedian. When *Dave* works, it's purely because of Murphy's take on his bizarre alien creation. His physical and fish-out-of-water humor works great here. It's the rest of the movie that's the problem. Adults will find the plot by-the-numbers, and the rest of the cast is nearly extraneous and actually distracting. Still, it's a perfect tweener vehicle—completely safe for both parents and kids, with nary a suggestive joke in sight.

| EXTRAS | The making-of video and gag reels are the main draw here. There are three Fox Movie Channel promotion videos as well, in addition to a few deleted scenes and an alternate ending, but none of the extras are worth more than a quick look through.

MOVIE ★★★
EXTRAS ★★

PlayStation: The Official Magazine
PICK OF THE MONTH

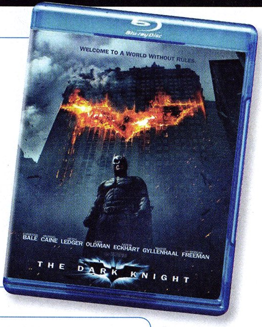
The Dark Knight

PRICE: $35.95 **RATED:** PG-13

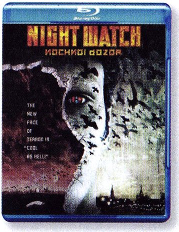
| MOVIE | When Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* arrived, the movie transcended its own niche genre to deliver one of the most intense, deep, and intelligently dramatic action movies in years. *The Dark Knight* makes it look like a trite effort. This is an amazing film. Putting aside the tragic death of Heath Ledger and his superb performance (and that of the entire cast), the real star here is the script. Never taking the easy or cheap road, this is a harsh and intense story. The script deftly explores the nature of its characters' psychological flaws, and the results are about as profound as popular cinema can hope to be.

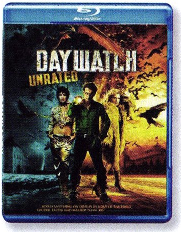
| EXTRAS | WB's first BD-Live release, *The Dark Knight*—much like *Wanted*—has the amusing ability to create your own commentary for the movie. Sadly, Nolan opted out of using this option. The first disc contains PiP or standalone documentary material that offers up a smorgasbord of behind the scenes info. On the second disc, a few fun documentaries detail the tech in the movie and, oddly, the psychological profiling of Bruce Wayne.

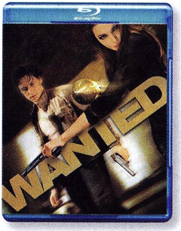
MOVIE ★★★★★
EXTRAS ★★★★

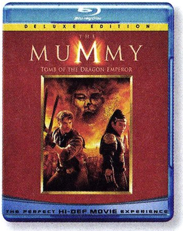

Blu-ray Disc
WELCOME TO A WORLD WITHOUT RULES.
BALE CAINE LEDGER OLDMAN ECKHART GYLLENHAAL FREEMAN
THE DARK KNIGHT

SPECIAL TIMUR BERMAMBETOV SECTION








Blu-ray Disc
DELUXE EDITION
THE MUMMY
TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR
THE PERFECT HI-DEF MOVIE EXPERIENCE

Night Watch

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** R/UNRATED

| MOVIE | Hyped as the most expensive cinema spectacular ever to come out of mother Russia, *Night Watch* is long on creative special effects and attempted style, and short on everything else. The story is nearly inexplicable and the main character, Anton, is introduced to us by paying a witch to place an abortion curse on his ex. Anton actually manages to get more unlikable from there. The story, based on the first novel in a Russian trilogy, seems hell bent on channeling a bad interpretation of William Gibson's style—where unexplained concepts and terms are thrown at you rapid fire, purely for the sake of trying to be cool. Many of its short set pieces are memorable, but taken as a whole, it's a complete mess.

| EXTRAS | Dry director's audio commentary and a text commentary from the Russian novelist might be a real draw for the strange diehard fans of this movie. Otherwise, there's a solid half-hour documentary about the production, some lengthy deleted and extended scenes, a few other tidbits, none of which particularly stand out.

MOVIE ★★
EXTRAS ★★½

Day Watch

PRICE: $39.99 **RATED:** R/UNRATED

| MOVIE | *Day Watch* is better than *Night Watch*, but ends up falling into most of the same traps of non-sensibility. The movie is essentially tied together by a series of great looking action sequences, and it's easy to see the visual connection to *Wanted*. Anton is slightly more likeable this time around, but the plot is plodding and predictable; the slow pacing and drawn-out story tries too hard to make you think the movie has a lot more depth than it actually does.

| EXTRAS | Boring commentary filled with gaps of silence, a reasonably decent documentary about the movie, and an array of trailers for the film.

MOVIE ★★½
EXTRAS ★★

Wanted

PRICE: $39.98 **RATED:** R

| MOVIE | The culmination of Russian director Timur Bekmambetov's stylistic exercises with *Night* and *Day Watch, Wanted* is all style over substance. That said, for a balls-out action flick, the style goes a long way and this is a remarkable, gleefully entertaining bout of brainless fun with interesting characters and over-the-top action sequences. Fans of the graphic novel will likely hate the movie—it has none of the superfluous comic book/superhero connections, and isn't nearly as tasteless.

| EXTRAS | Insist on annoying everyone around you during a movie? *Wanted*'s BD-Live functionality allows you to chat with other BD-Live buddies during the movie, and even share commentary. Sadly, there's no actual cast and crew commentaries, though it does include a completely original alternative opening to the movie that will probably cause most viewers to question why it was ditched. As usual for Universal, the PiP functionality adds a lot for second viewings.

MOVIE ★★★★
EXTRAS ★★★★

The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor

PRICE: $39.98 **RATED:** PG-13

| MOVIE | The *Mummy* movies sit proudly atop the list of mindless popcorn-munching cinema. The first was amusing enough, the second a lame, non-interactive video game, and the third is...unnecessary. It definitely delivers in the visuals, and it's always cool to see Jet Li and Michelle Yeoh fight each other. Other than that, there's little to recommend this for viewers over the age of 14. The jokes are embarrassingly flat, the plot threadbare, and most of the action is just second-rate *Indiana Jones* schtick. Apparently, however, enough of you went to see the movie that they are already prepping for a fourth. Oh yay.

| EXTRAS | Director Rob Cohen's commentary is surprisingly affable and excited for a guy who makes such crap. There are several making-of and behind-the-scenes documentaries of varying lengths, though only the longest is particularly interesting. Deleted scenes round out an average level of extras.

MOVIE ★½
EXTRAS ★★★

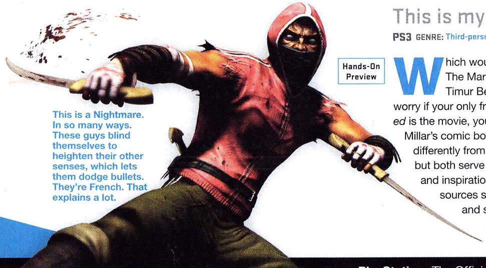
Jason D'Aprile misses Luc Besson. Do you? Let us know at : **PTOM_bluray@futureus.com**

PS3 | P

Wanted: Weapons of Fate

This is my face while I'm...quoting the comic!

PS3 GENRE: Third-person Action AVAILABLE: March PUBLISHER: Warner Brothers Interactive DEVELOPER: GRIN

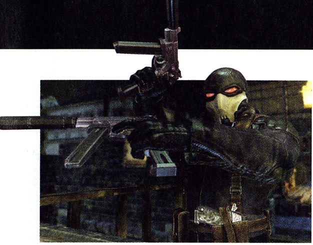


This is a Nightmare. In so many ways. These guys blind themselves to heighten their other senses, which lets them dodge bullets. They're French. That explains a lot.

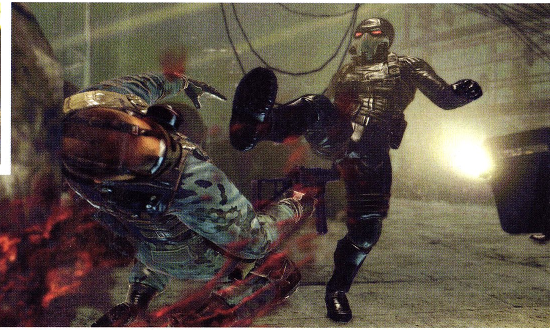
Hands-On Preview

Which would you prefer to play? The Mark Millar comic book or the Timur Bekmambetov movie? Don't worry if your only frame of reference for *Wanted* is the movie, you're in good company. Millar's comic book tells a tale framed quite differently from the blockbuster movie, but both serve as background material and inspiration for the game. The two sources serve to blend the paper and silver screen worlds into a fresh interactive format that's inspired by, but doesn't directly correspond to, both styles.

"This is a fiction extension that lives beyond the film," explains the game's producer, Pete Wanat. With experience and credits that include the superb *Chronicles of Riddick* (though it appeared on that *other* platform), *The Thing,* and *Scarface,* Wanat's pedigree resides among story-driven action adventure games. Cue *Wanted,* which fits the mold



A single handgun is cool enough when you can curve bullets, but dual-wielding Machine Pistols? We'll take that any day.



If the bullets run out (and they can) or you bore of capping cowering fools, you can always just close 'em down, see the Circle button indicator, and trigger a takedown. Over-enthusiastic blood effects on the staged screenshot is optional.

perfectly. Its action is pulled straight from the movie, which means it has a stylized dynamic that drives you from cover point to cover point, and then lets you pull off some spectacular moves, leaping across desks, closing on enemies in the blink of an eye, and reaching over your cover point to stab them in the neck.

Of course, the curved bullet mechanic that gave the movie's star, Wesley, that crucial edge, plays a huge role in the game. Once you've charged your "bullet meter" by shooting bad guys, you'll be able to see enemies behind cover (silhouetted in red). Lock on to your target, and using the left-analog stick, you line up your shot. Red means a miss, white means a hit. While that one shot is enough to off the enemies you face in the early levels, as you progress through the game you have to adapt and adjust your skills to face ever more powerful foes. For example, your curved bullets may only serve to force a target out of his cover hidey-hole. But that should be just the edge you need to close and execute a gratifying insta-kill, or just cap him from a distance. You'll get so skilled, according to Wanat, that you'll be able to take out multiple targets with a single bullet.

Cover 2 Defense

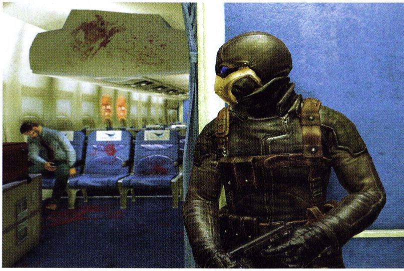
Though it's hardly calling a football play, taking cover plays a crucial role in the gameplay. It's not just about getting your sorry ass to safety since the system allows you to move more nimbly around the environment. Darting in fast-response moves from cover point to cover point (handily illustrated by an interface device that lets you know where you're going, and roughly how far it is) allows you to generate increased momentum, which factors into your ability to get an angle on an enemy that might be hiding behind a shield. This mechanic turns a potentially methodical, patience-based cover system into fast-action scurry among the crates and walls around each level, providing you with a range of tactics to take into each set piece battle situation.

Sure, you can keep the enemies' heads down by blind-firing from behind cover, providing a fraction of a second to make a key strategic move, but it's that movement into position, where the Circle button suddenly pops on screen to indicate an insta-, slow-mo killing blow, that makes mastering the control system so rewarding. Ah, the slow-motion death moves. So very brutal, so very sweet. Whether it's cracking a foot into a weak knee joint and following up with a knife stab to the neck, or just ducking past shots to jam the jimmy up the gut, it's hard to imagine these stylized moments getting old.

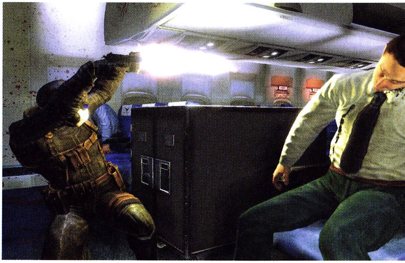
Wanat also told us that though the movie showcased Wesley's single pistol abilities, the game will let you dual wield pistols, later in the action grab an Uzi, and even snag dual-fisted Uzis for some bullet-smattering takedowns. Other weapons are also expected to be part of Wesley's arsenal, but haven't been revealed yet.

In fact, some of those weapon variances could crop up while you play as Wesley's father, Cross. Yes, you may have seen him [SPOILER ALERT!] die in the movie, but his scenes are presented in flashbacks that pad out key details in the story. In fact, while the movie jogged

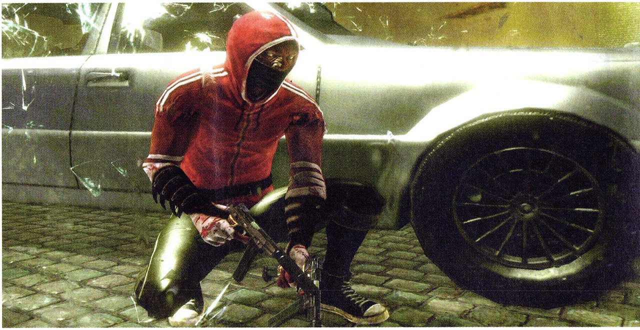
You're my inspiration... The *Wanted* movie owes loose plot themes to the comic book that had Wesley as a member of a super-villain, not super-assassin gang.



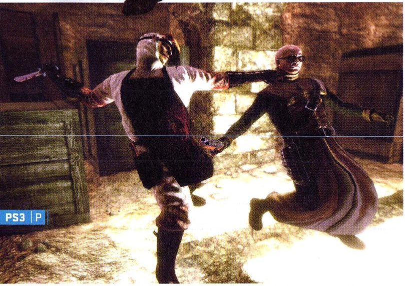
He's not napping, or intoxicated from imbibing too many Bloody Marys. He's dead. And if he wasn't he'd be caught in the crossfire in three...two...one...



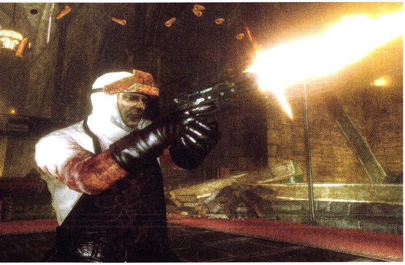
The drinks cart (that acts as the game's equivalent of the movie's train scene) will keep you alive. By stopping bullets, not its numbing contents.



Our hands-on demo showcased a pretty spiffy engine capable of generating tons of particle effects to color each action sequence.



It really won't matter who you're playing as: when you close in for the canned killing blow scene, we suspect you'll never, ever, be bored.



Unlockable characters will let you explore parts of the *Wanted* world that you may wish you'd never uncovered. The Russian cleaner? Not so nice.

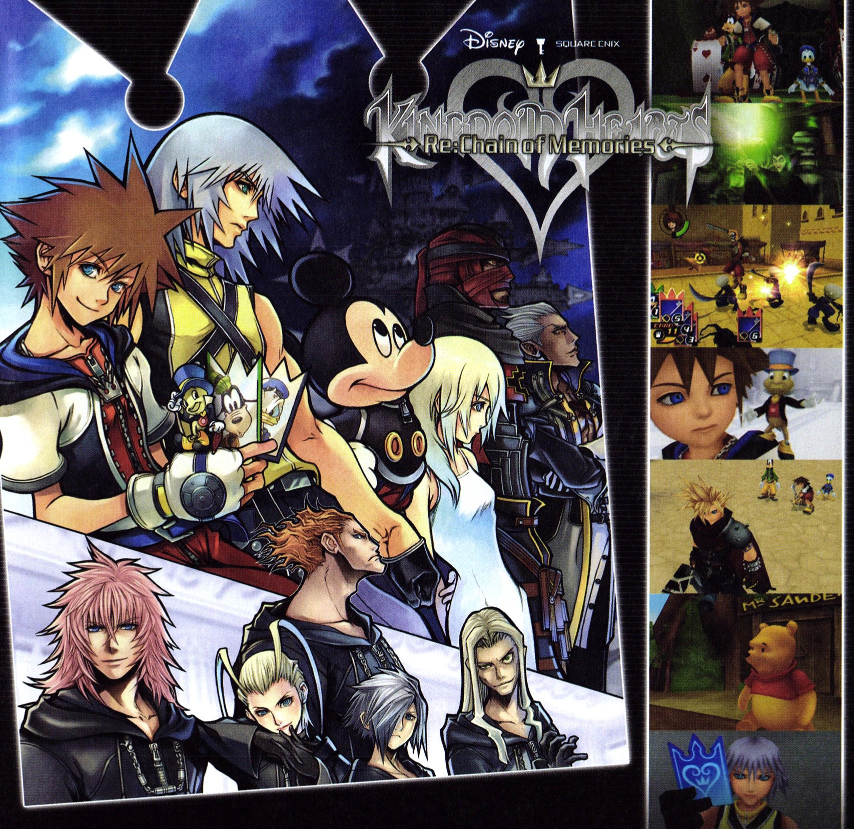
through Wesley's story of uncovering whom his father was, the game switches chromosomes and reveals backstory about your mother, Alyse. Various planned unlockables will also shed further light on the whole world order sketched but not inked by the movie and comic book (both Millar and Timur were key contributors to the overall plot outline, according to Wanat, though he makes it clear that "the game lives in Timur's world…").

Shooting bullets in mid-air

Wanat did reveal that the game progress will mimic much of the movie's flow, though in unique new takes (unless you've seen the movie, it'll seem entirely original). The train scene of the movie is recreated on an airplane, where you can shoot out the doors causing enemies to be sucked into the high atmosphere (while you're crouched smartly behind a drinks cart), and even involves the movie-like axis switch (where Wesley has to climb up a train car suddenly turned vertical). Suddenly you're climbing UP through the fuselage, and in the process are thrust into one of the many special interactive movie scenes where time slows, and you need to perform quick-witted stunts like shooting bullets out of the air (within a five-second window before it pierces your body with instant-death force), targeting and dropping enemies, and leaping across rooms with the ninja skills expected of a movie star…wait, we mean highly-trained assassin.

In our play test of a few of these levels they proved to be equally challenging and mesmerizing. It was easy to be lost in the exploding particles within the environment, the shiny textures, the changing scenery when you should be focusing on that tiny target of a bullet you need to stop in mid-air. Whatever we witnessed mid-stunt, simply surviving was enough to cause a suitably proud exhalation.

Where the game story ultimately leads is still a major unanswered question. For a movie that performed so spectacularly at the box office, you have to imagine that a sequel is in the works. That would work perfectly for Wanat and the development team at GRIN Barcelona. "We want to hand the baton back to Timur at the end of the game," says Wanat, "so if he should decide to do another movie he'll have the perfect place to pick up from." It's very easy to see *Wanted* the game as the first in a series that blends with the movie franchise into a business that we could easily be talking about 10 years from now. Of course, that requires this first game (and next movie) to build on the somewhat confused and convoluted story of the original, and also provide an experience that stands proudly on its own as a quality action game, regardless of the source material. From what we've seen so far, *Wanted* appears to mix memorable action scenes, a unique story angle, tight controls, and impressive audio and visual treatments in-engine to craft an experience worthy of the silver screen blockbuster name. Rob Smith



EXPERIENCE THIS PIVOTAL KINGDOM HEARTS STORY
AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE—FULLY REMADE IN 3D!

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EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Fantasy Violence

PlayStation®2 Disney SQUARE ENIX

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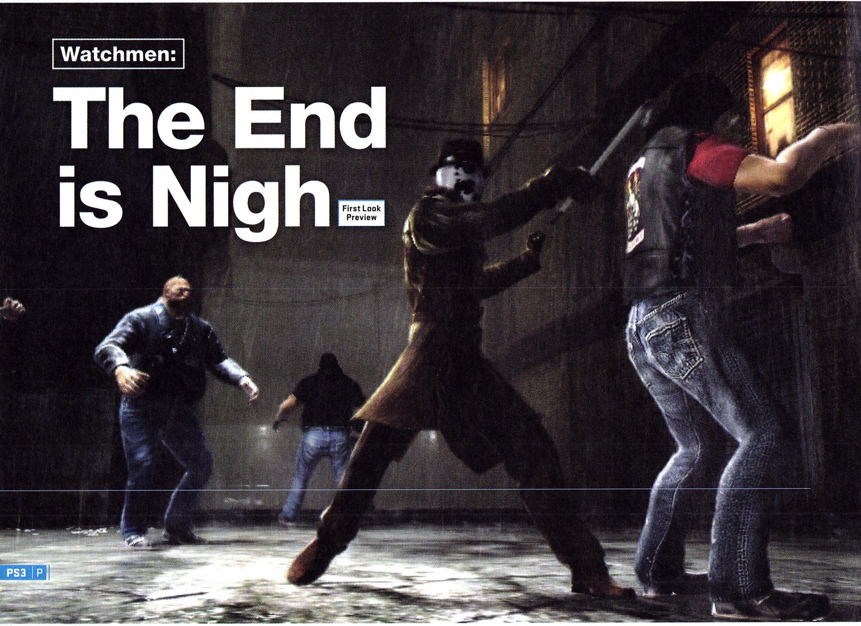
Watchmen:

The End is Nigh

First Look Preview



PS3 | P

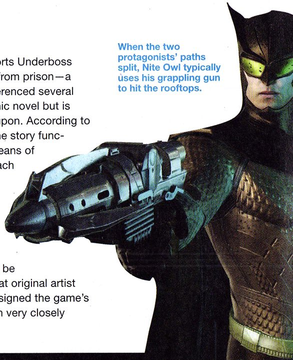
It was only a matter of time...

PS3 **GENRE:** Action/Beat-'em-up **AVAILABLE:** March **PUBLISHER:** Warner Brothers Interactive **DEVELOPER:** Deadline Games

It's not very often that I find a title screen exciting. In fact, I don't think I've even paid attention to anything that told me to "press start" in the past, oh, 15 years. But then I booted up *Watchmen: The End is Nigh,* and there on the screen, in all three glorious dimensions, stood the terrifying visage of Rorschach and the towering silhouette of Nite Owl. And suddenly the fanboy enthusiasm that once stirred in me deep apprehension at the thought of a *Watchmen* videogame began to inspire giddy excitement and cautious optimism. "This," I thought to myself, "could be really cool."

As you might have guessed, *Watchmen* is an entirely co-op affair. You'll dive into the dark side of New York City as either of the aforementioned masked vigilantes with an AI partner or a fleshy friend by your side (though, unfortunately, you won't be able to play co-op online… really). Longtime fans might also have guessed that the story actually predates the "present day" portions of the graphic novel, taking place in the mid-'60s when Rorschach and Nite Owl still worked as a team and before the Keene Act of '72 outlawed vigilantism and forced most heroes into retirement.

More specifically, the game follows the duo's attempt to capture super-villain-of-sorts Underboss after he escapes from prison—a subplot that's referenced several times in the graphic novel but is never expanded upon. According to the developers, the story functions as both a means of exploring Rorschach and Nite Owl's shared history and as a "companion piece" to the upcoming film. Also, hardcore fans will be happy to know that original artist Dave Gibbons designed the game's cutscenes—which very closely



When the two protagonists' paths split, Nite Owl typically uses his grappling gun to hit the rooftops.

resemble the style of the comic—and that many of the other *Watchmen* characters (including the original Minutemen) have cameos, though who and how remain a guarded secret.

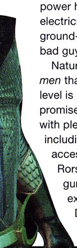
Under the Hood

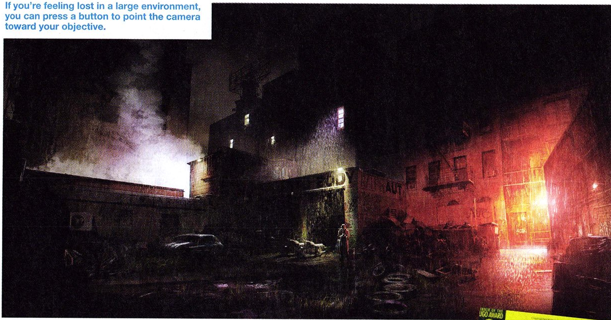
In terms of gameplay, *Watchmen* is a fairly straightforward beat-'em-up very much in the style of *God of War.* Light attacks (Square) and heavy attacks (Triangle) can be used to create free-form Combos, which will show up at the bottom of the screen. Throws (Circle) let you pick up and hurl goons off rooftops or into other enemies. The trigger buttons can be used for dodges and counterattacks or to execute character-specific special attacks; and dynamic quick-time events will initiate contextual finishing moves. Combat also features a slight auto-targeting mechanic that will ensure you're not just beating the crap out of the air, but unfortunately, it does not contain any team-up attacks to encourage cooperative play.

Each character *does* come with his own unique attributes and abilities, though. Rorschach utilizes an aggressive and often brutal form of street fighting that lends itself well to one-on-one combat. He's able to pick up weapons like bats and crowbars—each of which offers unique counterattacks and finishers—and has a Rage meter that fills as he takes and deals out damage. When full, it fuels a Bull Rush attack or initiates Rage Mode…which is exactly what it sounds like.

Nite Owl, on the other hand, uses a more controlled martial arts fighting style that relies on area attacks and stun techniques, which make for effective crowd control. And instead of a Rage meter, he has a Charge meter that can be used to power his electric armor and various electricity-based attacks, such as a ground-strike that sends all nearby bad guys flying.

Naturally, there's more to *Watchmen* than just combat. Though each level is roughly linear, the developers promise expansive environments with plenty of places to explore, including areas that can only be accessed by picking a lock as Rorschach or using a grappling gun as Nite Owl. You can also expect to find a few puzzles. During one mission, for instance, I had to clear a path by hopping into a giant crane and moving a few shipping crates. If the developers really want to stay true to the novel, there will also be a hoverbikes section. That's pure speculation, but still, fingers crossed.





If you're feeling lost in a large environment, you can press a button to point the camera toward your objective.

We're Watching You

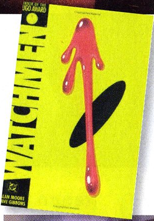
Though I was only allowed to play a few short snippets of the game, I was certainly able to get a sense for how all of its various elements are coming together. The graphics—especially the environments—already look amazing. The ominous lighting and gritty details not only create an atmosphere befitting of the source material but actually grant the world a welcome sense of realism. Rorschach and Nite Owl look equally natural—though they more closely resemble their movie counterparts than the original characters—and their banter during the missions was, for the most part, entertaining and in character.

Combat feels straightforward but solid, and the throws and finishing moves prove to be immensely satisfying—even though your punching bags are fairly generic thugs. I do worry that the game could grow stale without more variety, but again, I only played a tiny fraction of the overall product. Plus, *Watchmen* is not a full-priced game and will only be available as a download—though the developers promise that a single playthrough will take a good four to six hours. For now, I guess we'll have to keep watching for more.

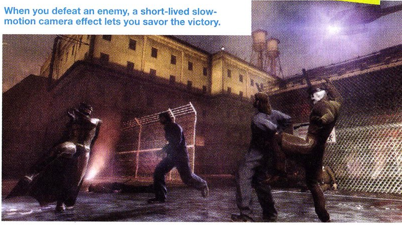
Scott Butterworth

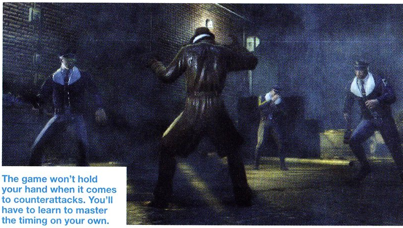
Who are the Watchmen?

For those of you who are not familiar with the graphic novel, there's not much I can do to help you. *Watchmen* is so layered and so dense that any plot summary or character profile I could provide would inevitably be grossly inadequate. That being said, here are the basics: In a re-imagined Cold War-era U.S., a group of masked heroes—forced into retirement by the very people they sought to protect—battle with personal demons and turbulent pasts after one of their own is murdered. Convinced that someone is out to destroy all of the world's "masks," Rorschach—a staunchly moralistic and nearly delusional vigilante—enlists the help of his levelheaded former partner Nite Owl in an effort to uncover the truth. And of course, the truth is so much bigger than they ever could have imagined…



When you defeat an enemy, a short-lived slow-motion camera effect lets you savor the victory.

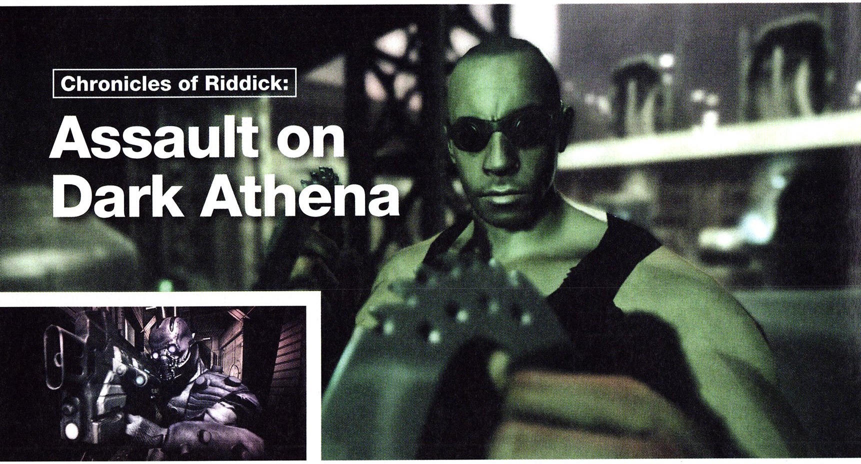




The game won't hold your hand when it comes to counterattacks. You'll have to learn to master the timing on your own.

Chronicles of Riddick:

Assault on Dark Athena



"The blade comes off when the bounty comes off." Riddick finds himself in close-quarters captivity with his own bounty hunter. What could go right?

A little girl hiding in the air vents sheds some narrative light on Riddick's motivations. Just don't call her "Newt;" it ticks off the designers.

Return to Escape From Butcher Bay, Part II

PS3 AVAILABLE: February GENRE: Action/Adventure
PUBLISHER: Atari DEVELOPER: Tigon Studios/Starbreeze Studios

PS3 | P

The only bigger insult than having a favored movie franchise turned into a mediocre videogame (for this is what usually happens) is having it turned into a great game…for a system you don't currently own, or can't quite justify purchasing: There it sits, just out reach on an alien console, looking cool and cheerily giving you the Finger.

When *Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* first made planetfall, you had two choices as a PlayStation gamer: You could quietly avail yourself of another gaming platform, or you could suck a rock. It's enough to make a guy shave his head, adopt a gruff voice, and go out and extravagantly hurt somebody.

The next (some would say still greater) insult is The Port from the Ignominious Past: The (formerly exclusive) game in question finally arrives, dragged kicking and screaming, to your platform… a year later, laced with graphics and interface "quirks," plot-spoilered to hell and back, and—if you're really lucky—branded with the scarlet letters: Greatest Hits. Insert "Riddick-cule of your Xbox-owning friends" crack here.

Well, unclench those glutes: Not only does Atari's forthcoming *Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena* finally put the *Riddick* experience in your hands, it offers an entirely new follow-up game-chapter of comparable length in the same package, qualifying the new product as both remake and sequel simultaneously.

Furthermore, this new hybrid "requel" title goes back and improves upon the original *Butcher Bay* chapter from the chassis up, in terms of visuals, enemy AI, and raw mechanics—enter a nifty new radial weapon-selection menu and thoroughly reworked audio. If you missed the prison-ship the first time around, here's your chance for a new—and far more fair—trial.

The Assault on Dark Athena section picks up where *Escape from Butcher Bay* left off, and finds Riddick aboard the space pirate vessel *Dark Athena*—along with bounty hunter William Johns. Through his own sheer badass-ness, Riddick manages to wrench himself out of cryosleep; he commences to skulk his way through the corridors of the *Dark Athena,* out for violence, blood and escape—basically in that order.

His curved Ulak melee-blades are good for a few close, wet yucks, but the newest fun here lies in direct manipulation of the ship's many literally brain-dead (but heavily-armed) humanoid soldiers, remotely controlled from various terminals about the ship like so many bipedal Predator drones. Using them to FPS your way from deck to deck is fun, to be sure—but deliberately walking one face-first into a massive spinning airduct fan-blade, to messily clog the works and provide a clear passage? Now that's (M-rated) entertainment. Chris Hudak

"You're not afraid of the dark, are you?" Hidden and violent: one, high-tech and panicked: zero. Always bet on pitch black, we say.

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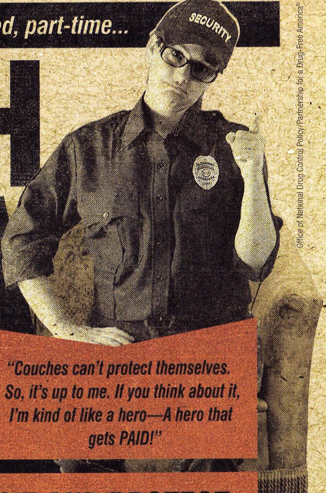

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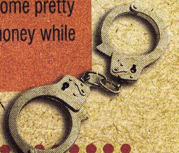

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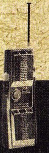

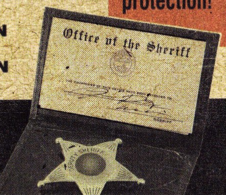

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PlayStation Gallery

Updates, sneak peeks, works-in-progress

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Deus Ex 3

PS3 AVAILABLE: Late 2009
GENRE: Action RPG
PUBLISHER: Eidos
DEVELOPER: Eidos Montreal

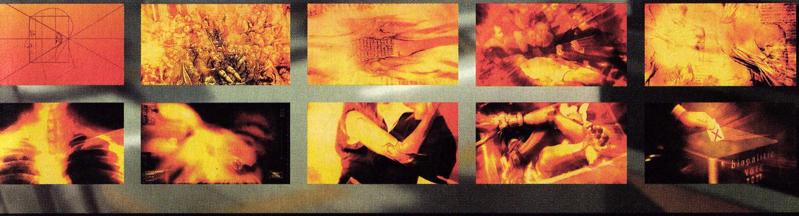
In the original, critically regaled, multiple Game of the Year award-winning *Deus Ex* (on PC) government agents had superhuman abilities thanks to discreet nanomachine "augmentations" implanted in their bodies. Those folks stuck with mechanical "augs" were seen as relics of an unsophisticated past.

Well, go back 25 years in *Deus Ex 3*—a prequel—and mechanical augs are at the very forefront of the technology curve. Agents use mechanical arms and cybernetic implants as aids in their fight against terrorism, as the human race evolves artificially at breakneck speed.

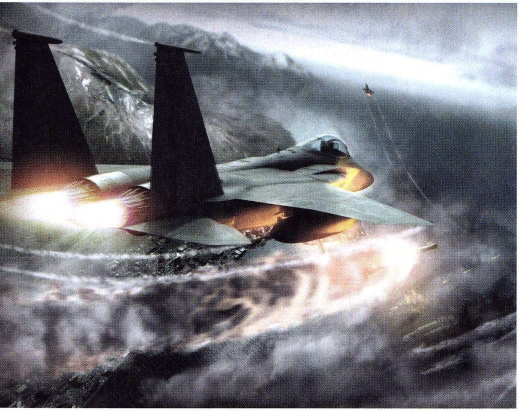
Details are currently incredibly scant but we do know that you play as Adam Jensen, a private security officer for a firm that makes mechanical augs. While working there he survives what appears to be a terrorist attack and, according to the devs, this is where "the conspiracy begins."

After the Xbox-only *Deus Ex 2: Invisible War* messed with the FPS/RPG formula of the first game to the point where it became a fan-alienating action experience, Eidos Montreal wants to bring the series back to its roots while still catering to a modern, mainstream audience by including the usual FPS staples like regenerating health.

Part of the first game's appeal was its dense, twisting plot. The teaser trailer released to prove the game is in the works offers up little in the way of tease, but did hide away some intriguing snippets. What do you make of it? *Da Vinci Code?* What's with the discriminatory (and you might say suggestive, if you read it a bit wrong) signage? Though neither Warren Spector nor Harvey Smith, principals who directed the original game to its great acclaim, are involved this go-around, the concept and setting are already well realized, and the potential for storytelling in prequel form is huge. Flag this one now as one to watch. Rob



PlayStation Gallery



Tom Clancy's HAWX Hands-On

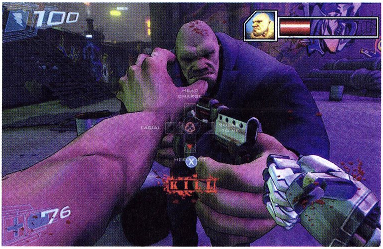
PS3 AVAILABLE: March GENRE: Flight Action
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Bucharest

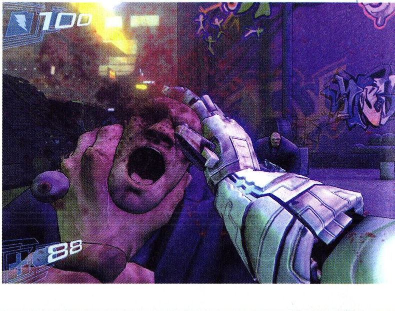
Already on our radar because of its high eye-candy quotient, the latest build of *Tom Clancy's HAWX* looks even prettier with improved environmental (read ground) detail to go along with its beautifully rendered aircraft. But our first opportunity for extended seat time in *HAWX's* cockpit reveals a decidedly arcadey experience. Enemies, be they air or ground forces, swarm in waves and your [insert modern fighter jet of choice here] comes equipped with a seemingly endless supply of missiles with which to dispatch them—imbuing a twitch shooter feel to the proceedings. The action comes on so fast and furious that there's rarely an instance where you experience the satisfaction of carefully orchestrating a dogfight kill. Of course, only the Normal difficulty is currently enabled so let's hope that the Hard and Elite settings integrate more simulation-like qualities to the gameplay. Roger

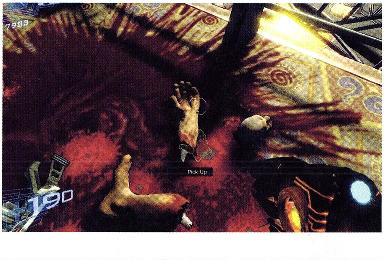
Merchant of Brooklyn First Look

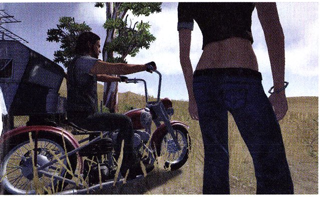
PS3 AVAILABLE: 2009 GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: TBA
DEVELOPER: Paleo Entertainment

Without a publisher, but with a backstory and style that oozes over-the-top originality, *MoB,* as it's known, is certainly a potentially quirky addition to the action game pool. We know about it because the dev team announced its development alongside a deal to use Crytek's Cry-engine (this is the powerhouse PC engine that fueled high-end system-showcase *Crysis).* The game itself? Well, its cel-shaded aesthetic and brutal Neanderthal (their word, not ours) gameplay involves electrocuting an enemy's head until it explodes, gouging the eye out of another, and lobbing an electrified body part (someone else's) as a bomb. It appears somebody is seeking to set a new standard for gratuitous violence! Oh goody. Rob





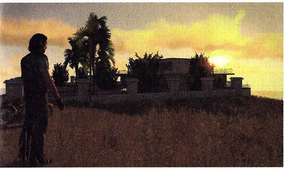


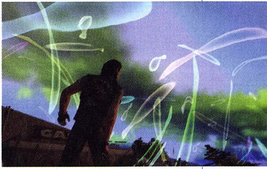


Ride to Hell First Look

PS3 AVAILABLE: 2009 GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Deep Silver DEVELOPER: Deep Silver

Grand Theft Hog? No, not exactly...but the oh-so-subtly-named *Ride to Hell* is a sandbox-style, open-world, decidedly mature paean to the outlaw-biker zeitgeist of 1970s America—a second (or first) viewing of movies like *Easy Rider* is not required, but highly recommended. You take the role of a Vietnam vet—returned to and adrift in an America he barely recognizes—who joins the "Devil's Hand" motorcycle gang. Refreshingly and unapologetically awash in sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, *Ride to Hell* lets you take hotpants-clad nymphos for a joyride and ingest screen-altering hallucinogenic mushrooms, all while grooving to a whopping 300-song set list of period, licensed rock. The game features the most extensive bike customization options you've ever seen, and a single-load, sprawling game-world incorporating elements of the California desert, networks of lawless highways, and peaceful, unsuspecting coastal towns. Chris





Terminator Salvation

PS3 AVAILABLE: May GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Warner Brothers Interactive DEVELOPER: GRIN

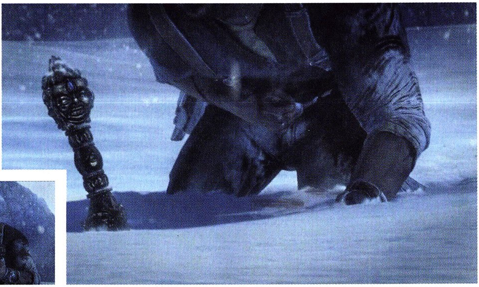
It shouldn't be a surprise that the big movie release this coming May will be supported by a videogame adaptation. And while that very premise doesn't automatically hint at future critical success, *Terminator Salvation* has a couple intriguing factors in its favor. The first is the license itself. While the battlefields of the *Terminator* movies would appear to lend themselves perfectly to videogame action, it has really never been effectively captured. Don't you have to go back to Bethesda's (yes, the *Fallout* folks') *Skynet* or *Future Shock* for a decent interpretation of the world? (Of course, we're casually dismissing the *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* offerings). European developer GRIN (its Barcelona studio is doing *Wanted,* its Stockholm studio has the reins to *Terminator)* is tasked with putting you in John Connor's shoes in a classic battle for survival against Skynet. That's about it for the details so far, and though a brief trailer will have been shown by the time you read this, you'll be able to see much more in coming issues of PTOM. Rob

TERMINATOR SALVATION

Uncharted 2

PS3 AVAILABLE: Late 2009 GENRE: Action/Adventure PUBLISHER: SCEA DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog

One measly trailer is all we've seen of Naughty Dog's hugely anticipated sequel to one of the most highly regarded games from PlayStation 3's early days. Nathan Drake staggers through knee-deep snow, but retrieves a...what is that thing? Whatever the macguffin, we're itching to know more about the next episode in what we suspect will be the platform's defining action-adventure franchise. In the meantime, here are a few very similar-looking images to pour over to your heart's content. Rob



WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

KILLZ

We've had ENOUGH... The ISA takes the war to Helghan

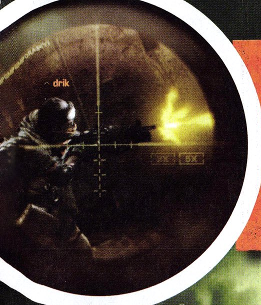
by Rob Smith

PlayStation
The Official Magazine
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Editors' Choice

What a rollercoaster development ride.

Somehow a relatively mediocre PlayStation 2 shooter became the great, virtually system-defining hope for PlayStation 3's launch. One pre-rendered trailer was all it took for the controversy, anticipation, and pressure to mount. No doubt the trailer thrilled with its promise of a boisterous invasion of the Helghast homeworld of Helghan. But it raised many questions about its technical ambitions, the developer's ability to deliver on the vision, and the time it would take to execute that plan. Valid questions one and all, and through the game's showings at industry events reaction to Killzone 2 was consistent in being continually mixed.

Well, now we have answers. We got our hands on the very first full release build and went from controller-shuddering beginning to exhausting, epic end. Twice. So strap yourself in for the drop on to alien soil, it's a fascinating ride.



NE 2

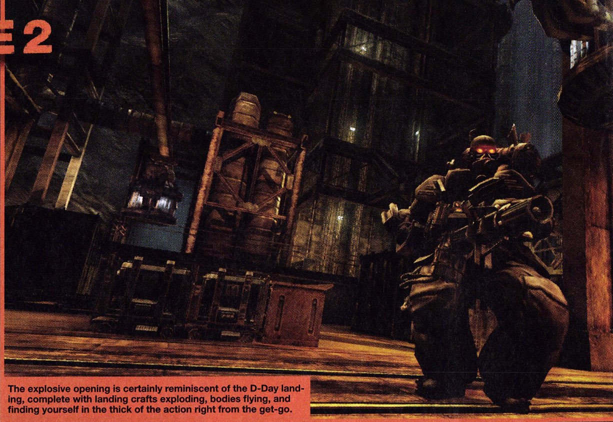
Platform: PS3

PRICE: $59.99

ESRB: Mature

PUBLISHER: SCEA

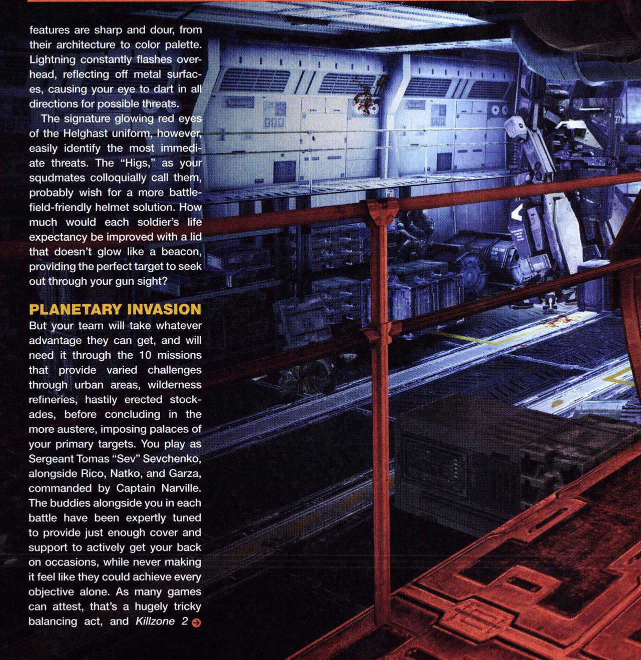
DEVELOPER: Guerrilla Games



The explosive opening is certainly reminiscent of the D-Day landing, complete with landing crafts exploding, bodies flying, and finding yourself in the thick of the action right from the get-go.

If you even care (and it certainly seems not to matter to getting started with *Killzone 2)* we left the Interplanetary Strategic Alliance two years ago on Vekta, where Helghan leader Scolar Visari and his powerful, zealot Helghast troops had launched an audacious invasion. Two years later and the ISA has had its fill of waiting for the next imperial move by the seemingly crazed führer. It's taking the fight right to the heart of Visari's empire, his home planet of Helghan. This time it's the good guys with the aggressive invasion strategy (do good guys invade other territories…? Oh the cultural parallels!) So you really can't blame Visari for directing his forces to repel the ISA forces. And so, we have war: bitter, bloody, passion-fueled battles of competing technology, wits, and wills.

The planet and its inhabitants don't appear as though they'd be significantly more hospitable had this been an interplanetary tourist cruise rather than a massive military invasion. As your squad carrier swoops onto the planet's surface after a thrill ride drop from the large capital ships in orbit it's clear you're entering a war zone. Your Alpha Squad group isn't the first on the planet's surface; entrenched Helghast soldiers defend key locations as the ISA forces begin executing the invasion (and arrest of Visari) strategy. The inhospitable environment is instantly threatening—aside from the glowing red-eyed soldiers swarming your position. Semi-destroyed buildings, the stucco and cement pockmarked with bullet wounds, tell their own tale. Corrugated iron siding hastily plugged over windows provides cover, and the rubble of destruction, the detritus of war, litters every ground space. Building features are sharp and dour, from their architecture to color palette. Lightning constantly flashes overhead, reflecting off metal surfaces, causing your eye to dart in all directions for possible threats.



The signature glowing red eyes of the Helghast uniform, however, easily identify the most immediate threats. The "Higs," as your squdmates colloquially call them, probably wish for a more battlefield-friendly helmet solution. How much would each soldier's life expectancy be improved with a lid that doesn't glow like a beacon, providing the perfect target to seek out through your gun sight?

PLANETARY INVASION

But your team will take whatever advantage they can get, and will need it through the 10 missions that provide varied challenges through urban areas, wilderness refineries, hastily erected stockades, before concluding in the more austere, imposing palaces of your primary targets. You play as Sergeant Tomas "Sev" Sevchenko, alongside Rico, Natko, and Garza, commanded by Captain Narville. The buddies alongside you in each battle have been expertly tuned to provide just enough cover and support to actively get your back on occasions, while never making it feel like they could achieve every objective alone. As many games can attest, that's a hugely tricky balancing act, and *Killzone 2* ➔

PERSONNEL ONLY

SKIRMISH

You don't need to get online to practice your tactical skills. A full offline suite of multiplayer options against bots works incredibly well, and adds a whole extra layer of content to the package.

This mode lets you play against 15 bots on any of the four difficulty levels, split into teams, and attempting any of the different play modes.

You can select the character model for either the ISA or Helghast side, their loadout, Faction, and even Squad (you can place players in any of up to six squads once you've attained the rank of Corporal).

The bots perform pretty well, using more cover on the higher levels, and targeting more headshots. They all toss grenades like they're hot potatoes, keeping most battles frenetic as you dodge the blast radius while retaining a bead on your target. For added value, and to allow you to get to know the maps, this practice is invaluable, and it's a terrific addition to the package.

Game modes include:

Assassination – Everyone on your team tries to take out (or then defend) a specific target as he moves through the environment.

Search and Retrieve – Propaganda speakers fill the city streets, hallways, and tunnels of Helghan in the single-player game, spewing Visari's rabble-rousing prose. Here you have to chase down and retrieve or destroy a speaker to boost or hamper morale.

Search and Destroy – Get to a specific location, plant the C4 explosives (like you use in the single-player game, using the Sixaxis controls to arm it), then retreat to a safe distance, and go boom.

Bodycount – Team Deathmatch! After all the instructions of achieving specific goals in the other modes, this one is simple… In the time allotted go out and kill as many of the enemy as possible!

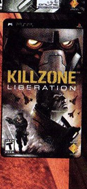
KILLZONE ORIGINS

PlayStation 2
KILLZONE

Killzone

PS2 | Release: Nov. 2004

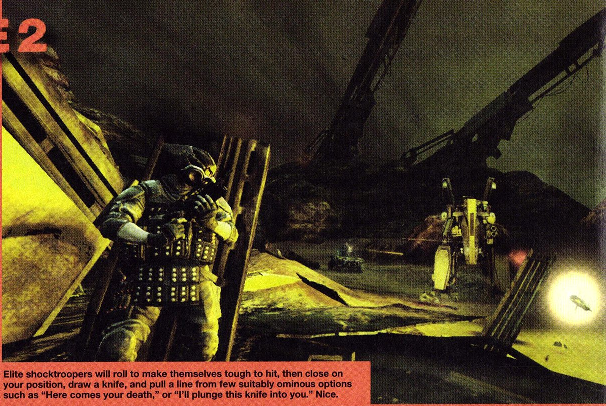
Visari's Helghast forces invade the ISA colony of Vetka. The Helghast are painted as a formerly human, now turned humanoid, race bent on aggressive expansion.



Liberation

PSP | Release: Oct. 2006

Picking up just months after the original game, despite the ISA inflicting heavy casualties on the Helghast forces, the war on Vekta is not over. Returning as Jan Templar, this PSP release focused on a covert mission to rescue hostages captured by Visari's henchmen.



Elite shocktroopers will roll to make themselves tough to hit, then close on your position, draw a knife, and pull a line from few suitably ominous options such as "Here comes your death," or "I'll plunge this knife into you." Nice.

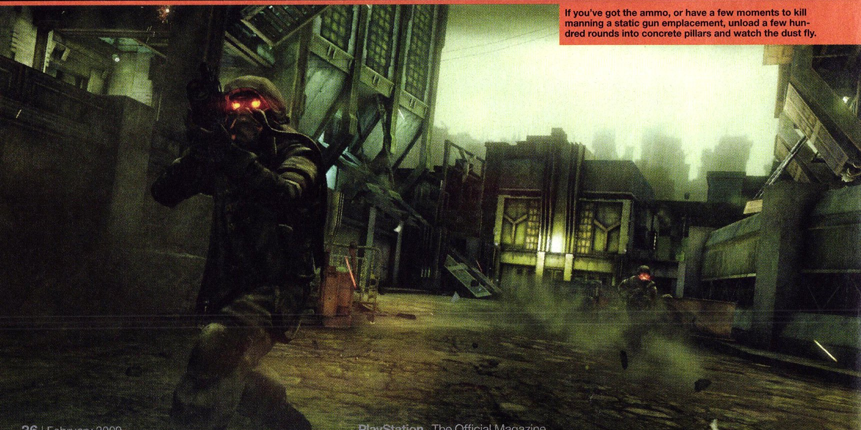
has it tuned as perfectly as we could hope.

These buddies serve to progress the background fiction to the story, which evolves into a play for power when scientist Evelyn Batton investigates the electricity-based petrucite resource. While you sorta have to listen to them, it's not always easy. The voice acting is very mediocre, occasionally bordering on placeholder performances masquerading as final cuts, a situation highlighted by the M-rated F-bomb-laden language splattered somewhat awkwardly throughout. That said, Brian Cox as Visari is perfectly menacing, and Sean Pertwee (son of actor Jon, for *Doctor Who* trivia aficionados out there) has a terrific edge-of-madness lilt to his voice as Radec, described as "Visari's hound," who becomes your final boss encounter (in one of the most memorable, challenging, time-consuming encounters ever… Seriously, you earn a Trophy for defeating him in less than 20 minutes!)

For the most part you'll be assisted by one of these buddies (and can revive them with a quick heal if they get cut down during a critical battle), but on a number of spectacular occasions an entire regiment stands by your side for major offensives. Against tanks and Helghast soldiers of all stripes (regular infantry, aggressive elite shocktroopers, rocket launchers, and snipers), the variety of challenge, and texture to the carnage, is memorably intense. On one frantic bridge assault I literally dropped the last enemy with the last bullet in my gun. In an earlier assault I had to hop in the driver's seat of a tank after he was taken out to fend off an onslaught on the territory we'd just taken. Adding in a quick vehicle ride like this felt perfectly contextual, and not a forced effort to freshen the gameplay. Same thing later in the game when you man a *Star Wars*-like AA gun on an orbiting ship, and when you find an agile, powerhouse mech at an outpost, putting you firmly at the pointy end of an assault on a decrepit stockade.

HELGHAN FASCISM

In fact, believability and consistency are hallmarks of the *Killzone 2* experience. None of the circumstances, weapons you find, locations you visit, or frankly any of the details in the world feel arbitrary. The world is consistently realized ➔



If you've got the ammo, or have a few moments to kill manning a static gun emplacement, unload a few hundred rounds into concrete pillars and watch the dust fly.

Yeah, it's that detailed, and it looks that spectacular. Of course, you'll spend so much time shooting the "Higs" that you won't have time to stop and smell the roses.

TACTICALITIES & STRATEGERIES

Blood Medallion Heavy

One of the first mini-boss encounters is with the chaingun-wielding Blood Medallion Heavy. While your allies will yell the trick here (which is to get it to turn and then shoot the glowing pack on its back) in practice and the heat of battle, that ain't so easy. In this case, your best tactic is to take cover behind the wall to your right, and move your way to its side, taking out the Helghast soldiers that are supporting behind it. As your squaddies pound on it from the front, zoom in on the target and unload. It'll turn to face you, but in doing so will expose its vulnerable place to your entire squad. Otherwise, target its head to do enough damage to get it to turn for a moment, then don't miss your opportunity.

Reward: Kill this Heavy in under a minute to unlock a bronze trophy for your fast-action takedown.

Arc Trooper

The Arc Trooper is brutal foe with his electricity weapon. You need to keep circling the crates that provide protection while luring him under the overhead barrels. Shoot the barrels to paralyze him, then take your shots.

Reward: Defeat it in under a minute-and-a-half to unlock the trophy.

Weapon of Choice

Automatic rifles: Use the zoom. It's that's simple. It tightens your aim, giving much greater punch to your weaker standard issue rifles.

Pistol: You always have your pistol (more options than your standard issue can be scavenged from the battlefield) with unlimited ammo. So be sure to use it to shoot the Helghan symbols and also the wooden crates that can hide extra ammo and grenades. This is particularly important if you like the weapon you're carrying, but are low on ammo. It's also handy in a pinch for headshots when all other options have been exhausted.

Knife: Don't underestimate the knife. While the melee attack with the butt of your gun can be effective, it can take a few frantic whacks against some of the more powerful enemies. The knife can be devastating if you find yourself at close quarters (which you will).

Flamethrower: The first time you use it you'll be looking for a stick and marshmallows as the Helghast soldiers cook (mmm, tastes like chicken). Remember to arc the trajectory against more distant enemies.

Cover Your Ass

Killzone 2's cover system works incredibly well when you use it correctly, and figure out its quirks. You'll need it, and you'll stay alive longer, so keep using it. Basically, you crouch against any cover-worthy object (metal crates, walls, etc.) and use the Left-analog to peek to the side or up over the top of your cover, and then release it to duck back down. You can blind-fire from behind cover, but it's largely a waste of ammo. Remember that some objects, particularly curved barrels, might look like suitable cover, but you don't "stick" to them.

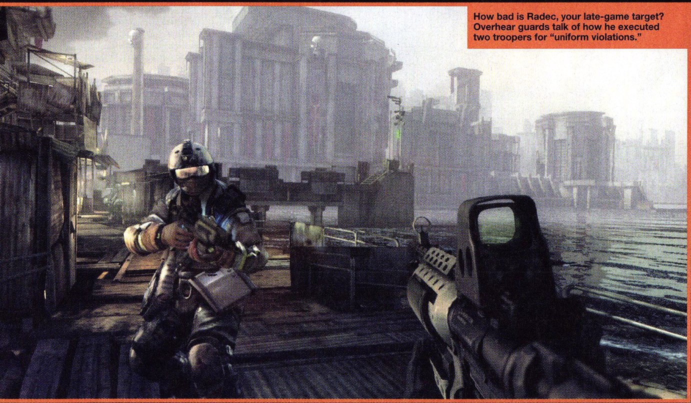
KILLZONE
COMMAND CENTER
INFO
NEWS
MEDIA
MY KILLZONE
LEADERBOARD
FORUMS
FAQ
US
COMMAND CENTER
Early Helghan Era unlocked
Read more
0
Posts in Last Day
30
Total Threads
49434
Total Posts
2141171540
Game Points
The Exodus
Simon Larouche explains multiplayer level creation
Meet Sev, the new Killzone 2 hero
First Killzone 2 Box Co
WHY SIGN UP?
SIGN UP
CAN YOU STAND YOUR GROUND? SIGN UP TODAY!
Read More
NEWS
VC-32 Sniper Rifle
First Killzone 2 Box Cover Revealed
Gotta Squash Them All
POLL
POPULAR FORUM TOPICS
KILLZONE 2 PREVIEW

WARZONE

Killzone 2's extensive 32-player (16 against 16) online multiplayer components (though no cooperative mode, which is a huge shame) were not available for public consumption as we put this issue to bed, so we have to defer judgment on whether it plays and behaves as advertised.

However, in our controlled environment playtests the level design leant themselves to some intriguing encounters. Multiple routes through the levels, the inconsistency of cover (some of it is indestructible, but the ability to destroy pieces makes for an evolving battlefield environment), and engaging modes give this a real chance of becoming the leader in the PlayStation Network online clubhouse.

We'll have updates on how the various classes play out, the ranking system that will allow you to assign squads to your teammates, and the Killzone.com web site tracking and activity next month.



How bad is Radec, your late-game target? Overhear guards talk of how he executed two troopers for "uniform violations."

SYMBOL OF POWER

Destructible Helghast symbols are dotted around every environment, often tucked in odd places. It's another collectible alongside the intel documents you find, and encourages you to check every wall, nook, and cranny. If designed to boost morale to the troops, Visari could have insisted in more obvious placement, so they could actually be seen and admired. But that wouldn't have been so conducive to the game mechanic, so we'll give them that one.

Tip: Look everywhere, through doors cracked ajar, behind chain link fences, high on tall buildings…like we said, everywhere.

To get you started, here's where you can find all five of the symbols in the third mission of the game:

1 of 5: Right at the start, as you go across the walkway, look to left and the big Y-like Helghast symbol, and it's to the bottom right.

2 of 5: Fighting through the rooms, one has red flags and four doors, a couple slightly ajar. Through one is a Helghast symbol.

3 of 5: When you shoot the electricity box to access the door, before going through the door, look to your left (and up a bit) for a symbol.

4 of 5: Go through the door where enemies are on a barbed wire-topped walkway. If you go up the stairs there, on the next landing is a symbol.

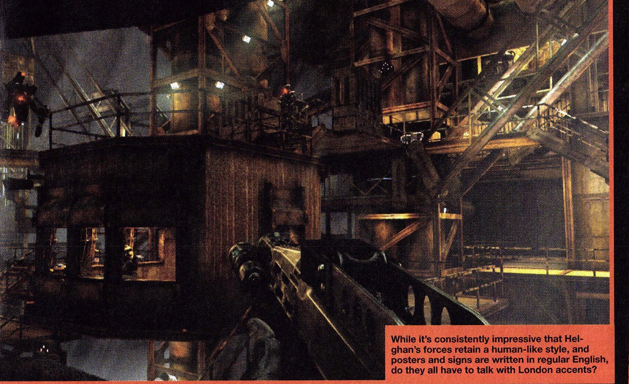
5 of 5: After the tank bursts through, before heading to the next room, find the ladder (from the ground), look up to the right of it for the last symbol.

in its unappealing flavor. Those hard edges are matched perfectly by the insignia of the Helghast forces, which echo an unnerving blend of Nazi and Communist motifs. From SS stormtrooper apparel to linked fist emblems it's not hard to strip the futuristic, off-world setting away to reveal an underbelly of classic World War II themes and objectives.

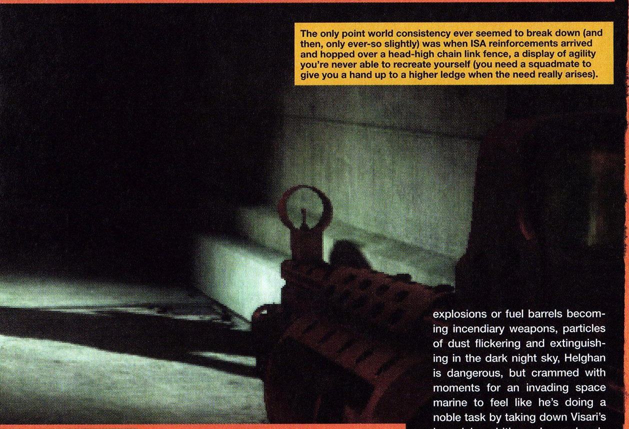
Personally, I was delighted that the game never resorted to forced futuristic paradigms, such as swarms of alien insects (which you could conceivably argue as perfectly reasonable on an alien planet) to freshen the enemy roster. Every enemy is human(oid), but remains challenging and each encounter original through the terrific deployment of military tactics. They flank, they use cover and blind fire to keep you pinned down. If you pop them when they emerge from cover they don't go through a rote mechanic to reappear in the same spot, but move along the cover in search for a new vantage point. It makes each encounter constantly dynamic, and on the higher of the difficulty levels (Elite is unlocked after completing the game), incredibly challenging, but so rewarding when you win.

Mastering the cover system is critical, and you'll quickly discover you can't play *Killzone 2* as a run-and-strafe shooter. Even before deadly snipers are introduced to the fray, you need to crouch, push against the cover, then peek out to take accurate pot shots. Even the most basic Helghast troop takes a whole heap of bullets to drop. Targeting headshots is critical (and you earn another Trophy for the number of helmets you knock off). Certainly the battlefield is littered with weapons and ammo, but the most choice options are balanced effectively by the ammo available. You can only carry one weapon (plus a pistol) so you'll constantly switch, mix-and-match for particular situations, and discover your own favorites (an incredibly comprehensive stats tracking system lets you know how many kills you get with all the weapon types). I have to say, the first time I immolated an enemy with the flamethrower was disturbingly satisfying. The perfectly hued flickering flames, the screams of pain, the writhing animation, it was—I'm almost embarrassed to admit—awesome!

And it's true to say that *Killzone 2* is filled with moments that can handily be described as inspiring awe. Each scene is incredibly well detailed, from the gaps in jerry-rigged cover points letting you sneak in a killing headshot to scarred and scratched textures, the planet feels entirely believable. Taking down a building, watching concrete pillars shatter to reveal the pale steel skeleton below, shooting through soft material crates to get at the enemies behind, manning gun turrets, sniping fools through the dense smoke of grenade

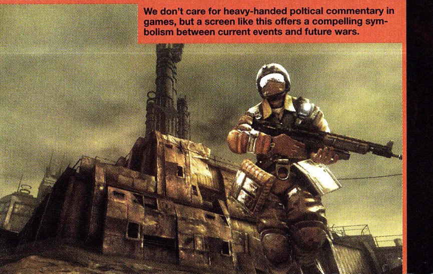


While it's consistently impressive that Helghan's forces retain a human-like style, and posters and signs are written in regular English, do they all have to talk with London accents?



The only point world consistency ever seemed to break down (and then, only ever-so slightly) was when ISA reinforcements arrived and hopped over a head-high chain link fence, a display of agility you're never able to recreate yourself (you need a squadmate to give you a hand up to a higher ledge when the need really arises).

explosions or fuel barrels becoming incendiary weapons, particles of dust flickering and extinguishing in the dark night sky, Helghan is dangerous, but crammed with moments for an invading space marine to feel like he's doing a noble task by taking down Visari's imperial ambitions. I can barely imagine how cool this would all be in co-op mode, an omission we hope to have addressed in later downloadable content. But it's fitting that the conclusion feels like stepping off a rollercoaster: a little shaken, having endured the odd moment that wasn't perfectly fluid, but ultimately beaming with satisfaction of a great ride experienced. Without a doubt *Killzone* fans, action, and shooter fans of any stripe will instantly tag this sequel as a powerful contender for the best game of 2009. ★★★★★



We don't care for heavy-handed poltical commentary in games, but a screen like this offers a compelling symbolism between current events and future wars.

GATHERING INTEL

Scattered around the Helghast homeworld are briefcases of intel reports that, well, contribute to your potential collection of Trophies. Just one of the 10 missions has no intel to scavenge at all (it makes perfect sense within the storyline), and the rest have any from two to four pieces hidden away.

To get your Trophy collecting going, we've collected all the locations of the intel in the first five missions. The rest? We'll give those away next month.

Corinth River

1 of 2: You really can't miss this. You're prompted with the instruction that intel can be retrieved that will open content on Killzone.com, and the first case is right in front of you!

2 of 2: After you blow off the door with the rocket launcher, make your way through the next room, and it's under the stairs you ascend at the far end.

Blood Meridian

1 of 3: After you blow the door (using the Sixaxis control), it's just on the right hand side a little way down the corridor.

2 of 3: After the epic battle across the bridge walkway, head through the building, then go up the stairs to the mounted gun emplacement (on this landing area you can also find a Helghast symbol through the chain link fence). Now go inside the building and it's right there before you get in the elevator.

3 of 3: During the fight across the walkways you enter a room with two Helghast, one up a small flight of stairs in front of you. On the floor of this room, behind a dumpster, is the last intel of this mission.

Visari Square

1 of 2: After fighting through the destroyed rooms drop down through a blown out floor and the intel is on the floor in that room among the rubble.

2 of 2: After you kill all the hostiles where the tank crashes into your defensive position head into the next room, and find it on the left side before you head out to take Visari Square.

Salamun District

1 of 3: As you battle towards your rendezvous with Garza, a shotgun wielding Helghast will blow through a wall. The intel is in the room he enters to get to you, on a shelf.

2 of 3: After the big fight in the courtyard, on the walkway floor, there's a room with two green-lock doors; it's in that room.

3 of 3: After you use C4 to access the building, it's on the ground floor, near the stairway you need to take up (opposite the door), sat on some crates.

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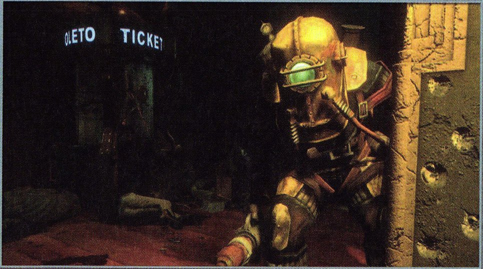
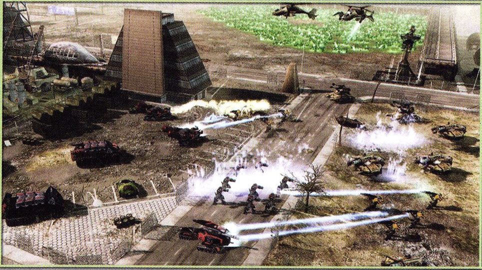

OLETO TICKET

DEMOS

MODS



PATCHES

EXPAND GAMIN

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This is the premier, next-gen game links site, built for the community by the community. FileRadar not only puts the power of game file distribution in your hands, but lets you feedback to save everyone a load of time and grief. It takes the power of a site like Digg and applies it to the most essential part of games you're either actually playing or want to play:

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G KNOWLEDGE

GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

LITTLEBIGPLANET FALLOUT 3

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR

MADDEN NFL 09 BIOSHOCK

PURE

NHL 09 FIFA 09 MORTAL KOMBAT VS. DC UNIVERSE

CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII

NBA 2K9 WWE: SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009

PRINCE OF PERSIA YAKUZA 2

MIRROR'S EDGE RATCHET & CLANK: QUEST FOR BOOTY

DEAD SPACE GRID

ROCK BAND 2 NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA STORM

CIV REV SINGSTAR

PERSONA 4 RESISTANCE 2

BUZZ! QUIZ TV PIXELJUNK MONSTERS

STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED

SOULCALIBUR IV SSFIITHDR

VALKYRIA CHRONICLES

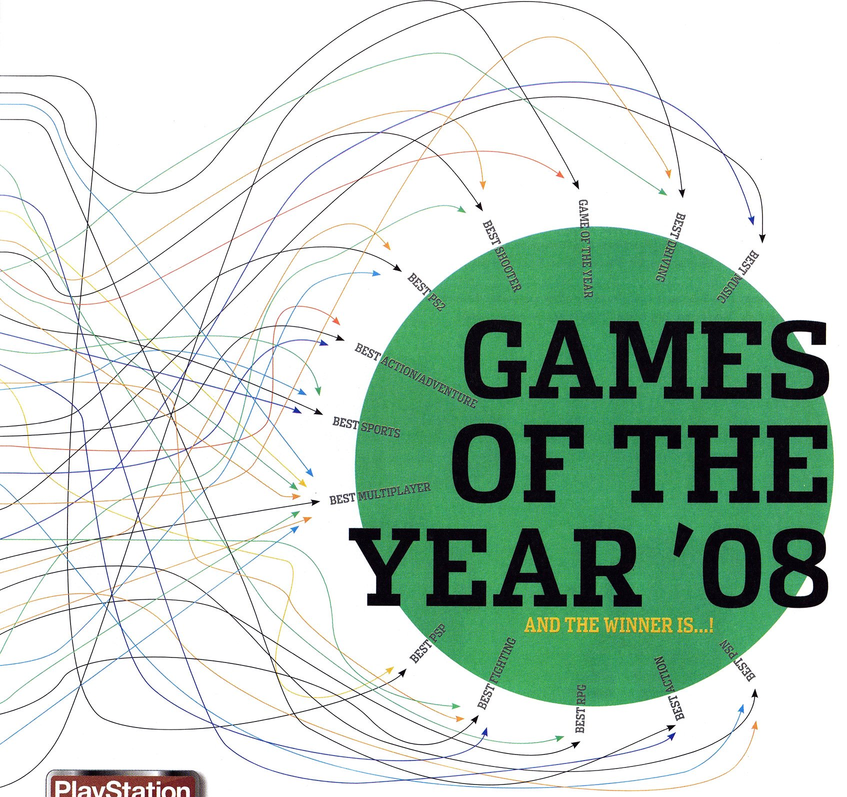
BURNOUT PARADISE

SAINTS ROW 2

FAR CRY 2

GAMES OF THE YEAR '08

AND THE WINNER IS...!


BEST SHOOTER
GAME OF THE YEAR
BEST DRIVING
BEST MUSIC
BEST PS2
BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE
BEST SPORTS
BEST MULTIPLAYER
BEST PSP
BEST FIGHTING
BEST RPG
BEST ACTION
BEST PSN

PlayStation The Official Magazine GAME of the YEAR 08 AWARDS

An embarrassment of riches. Spoilt for choice. More is more. However we say it, no trite cliché can accurately sum up the incredible year that PlayStation gamers are enjoying, with so many astounding releases swirling around our favorite systems. That's why it was such a tangled, tortured process to home in on the winners, but the struggle was worth it. What better way to reminisce about all the great gaming moments that we loved this past year?

GAME OF THE YEAR

Accepted by Hideo Kojima, Studio Head, Kojima Productions

"I am very honored to receive *PlayStation: The Official Magazine's* prestigious awards of 'Game of the Year' and 'Best Action game.'* Since *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* is an action game, I couldn't be happier to receive the Best Action Game award. Also, I feel very privileged that *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* has received the coveted award of Game of the Year award over so many other wonderful titles released this year. Thank you very much." (* See Pg. 54 for Best Action game.)

The Best...Award goes to...

Best Original IP: LittleBigPlanet

Throughout the existence of videogames, platform games have essentially served as the standard-bearing definition of what gaming is. So much so, that the genre now seems totally strip-mined of any vestige of originality or freshness. Until… *LittleBigPlanet*. In what could well be a watershed moment for the PlayStation 3 platform, *LBP* practically redefines what constitutes a next-gen game. Forget about bigger games with better graphics, the new gaming frontier lies in the realm of *your* creativity and lets you share it with the world.

The Game That Gary Implores You Not to Ignore Award: Valkyria Chronicles

He's been blathering on about it for months now inside the office. Don't make Gary visit each and every one of you to make sure you all pick up this epic Japanese role-playing game that single-handedly revived Gary's interest in the genre. It's that good.

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

Publisher: Konami

Developer: Kojima Productions

We, the *PlayStation: The Official Magazine* editors, do hereby, in the witness of our esteemed readers, recognize the greatest achievement in PlayStation 3 gaming for the year 2008. By way of preamble, this was a surprisingly difficult decision to reach. This was the year that PS3 gamers enjoyed the best-looking version of smash hit *Grand Theft Auto IV*. It was the year we fell for Sackboy.

But it was also the year Solid Snake, via Kojima Productions, delivered his most scintillating performance ever. And for a franchise as beloved, dissected, and regaled as this one, to take stratospheric expectations and still manage to blow them away was an achievement of such magnitude and vital importance for the PlayStation 3 that it could not be overlooked. If you want to show a friend what "next-generation" console gaming means, if you feel the need to justify your investment, or if you plain want to show off, *Metal Gear Solid 4* is the game that perfectly illustrates how yours is bigger.

Crucially, the blend of storytelling and gameplay mechanics ensures that even series newcomers will understand and appreciate what all the fuss is about. We finished it. We played through it again. And yet again. And in this age of the siren song of so many games cooing for our entertainment time, the *MGS4* pull is so powerful and compelling that in the end there really was no other option but dub it the greatest gaming achievement of this PlayStation year.

Weapons
EQUIP
BACKPACK
RIFLES
AK102
5.56 x 45mm
531
M4 CUSTOM
5.56 x 45mm
531
MK. 17
7.62 x 51mm
173
M4 CUSTOM
ASSAULT RIFLE
WEIGHT : 3.0KG
531
220.0m
Range
5.56 x 45mm
D
E
C
C
B
D
L1 VIEWER
L2 CUSTOMIZE

5.56mm carbine.
Holds 30 rounds.

Choose a weapon to equip.

DREBIN 10280DP / EQUIP 10.7KG

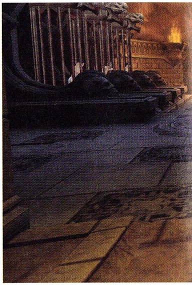
BEST PSP

GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

Publisher: SCEA | Developer: Ready at Dawn Studios

With *God of War: Chains of Olympus,* we finally saw the PSP meet its potential. Superb graphics, fluid animations, pretty lighting, and rich backgrounds contributed to that, undoubtedly, but we're not just talking about looks. More important than the snazzy visuals was the fact that *Chains of Olympus* wasn't a port or a re-make. It wasn't created with a for-consoles mentality. Instead, *Chains of Olympus* was specifically tailored to the needs of the PSP: the single analog nub, the dual shoulder buttons, and the smaller screen. And oh what a difference that extra attention made! The controls are slick, easily graspable (literally and metaphorically), and responsive. The boss battles are memorable and epic, in spite of the small screen. Yes, the story wasn't overly concerned with coherency, yet it somehow still tugged at the heartstrings.

What could've been a half-hearted cash-in on a big-name franchise became not just a valuable addition to the *God of War* experience, but also one of the most fulfilling PSP titles to date. Even on a small screen vengeance left an impact. Our hope is that more PSP games will follow suit.



HONORABLE MENTION

CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII

PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX | DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX

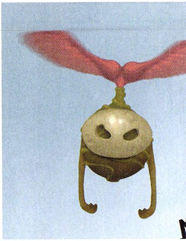
BEST PSN

PIXELJUNK MONSTERS

Publisher: SCEA | Developer: Q-Games

A masked man clad in an oval shell and a grass beard scampers through forests, deserts, and snowfields. He constructs towers out of trees. He dances. He gathers blue gems and golden coins. He labors tirelessly, all to keep safe the crowd of helpless, grass-skirted munchkins frolicking outside of their shared hovel. Wave after wave of enemies fall beneath the might of his assortment of towers. Ah, such a simple concept, with such a simple art style. Yet, so utterly addictive.

We won't deny it. We were enthralled by the magic of *PixelJunk Monsters.* There were other contenders for PSN Game of the Year—it was a phenomenal year for PSN gaming, after all, with unique original titles like *echochrome, The Last Guy,* and even *Elefunk,* not to mention full-blown releases like *Siren: Blood Curse.* Yet *PJM* out-delivered them all, first with the *PJM: Encore* add-on, and then with the free patch that added Trophy support (for a total of less than $20, no matter how you purchased the pieces). Last year, *Everyday Shooter* put PSN on your radar. This year, *PJM* cemented PSN's status as a supplier of inventive, artistically interesting, smaller-scale yet still slickly polished titles. We adore (and award) *PJM* for that.



HONORABLE MENTIONS

RATCHET & CLANK: QUEST FOR BOOTY

PUBLISHER: SCEA | DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO HD REMIX

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM | DEVELOPER: BACKBONE

Grooviest Retro Remake: Space Invaders Extreme

When the remake of a 30-year-old simplistic arcade shooter has an import-worthy soundtrack, you know something funky is up. But the music isn't the only thing that rocks about this retro redux; the psychedelic gameplay is just as groovy.

SCORE 0000164650
LEVEL 02
RATE ×10
CHAIN
BREAK
BOMB
SPACE INVADERS EXTREME

Best Story: BioShock

It's not the plane crash. Nor is it the initial glimpse of the ruined underwater city of Rapture. No, it's that moment a few hours in, when you face one of the greatest moral choices in gaming: Selfishly harvest the Little Sister or selflessly rescue her. That's when *BioShock* truly sinks its tendrils deep into your psyche, and it doesn't let go even after you beat the game.

Accepted by the entire development team at Ready At Dawn Studios

"After all the success we've had with *Daxter,* to see *Chains of Olympus* be even more successful is an incredible feeling. We knew all too well going in what a challenge taking after such a talented crew like Sony Santa Monica would be, but interestingly enough that was what motivated us in the first place. The fact that people see the game as on par with its PS2 counterpart is a huge compliment and a testament to the team we've assembled here at Ready At Dawn Studios."

BEST PS2

YAKUZA 2

PUBLISHER: SEGA | DEVELOPER: SEGA STUDIOS

As the venerable PS2 rounds out its eighth year of existence, we often overlook the wealth of gaming goodness that still graces the system. *Yakuza 2* is the PS2 game that refuses to be ignored. While not technically flawless or perfectly balanced, the Japanese gangster epic offers a breadth and depth of experience that would captivate and impress us on any system. The game's blend of enthralling storyline, intriguing characters, satisfying beat-'em-up action, along with side-games ad infinitum, kept us playing for weeks and have us salivating for *Yakuza 3* for the PS3.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

PERSONA 4

PUBLISHER: ATLUS USA | DEVELOPER: ATLUS

STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS | DEVELOPER: KROME STUDIOS

Accepted by Toshihiro Nagoshi, R&D Creative Officer, Consumer R&D Div.

"I am honored to be nominated. This title has recorded sales of nearly one million copies of the regular version and greatest hits versions together in Japan. We live in a time where a Western-produced title with big domestic success can also record big sales in Japan. And that's why I wish from my heart that a Japanese title like *Yakuza* with big sales success in our own market can be successful overseas as well.

I believe that there is no national boundary for entertainment like games, comics and films. Once you play *Yakuza* and *Yakuza 2,* you will experience a novel sensation, which is only possible with these titles because they provide Japanese flavors straightforward and undiluted.

If you happen to find this game at a store, please pick up a copy, play the game and let me know how you liked it. Thank you very much."

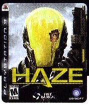
PIXELJUNK
79

Accepted by Dylan Cuthbert, President and Executive Producer, Q-Games

"We are honored to accept this award and are really happy that everyone (and their wives and husbands!) has enjoyed *PixelJunk Monsters* so much to make it the success it has been. We have been really surprised with the response and have had a great year building up a rapport back and forth with the *Monsters* fan base. All this has really motivated and inspired us, and we are now deep into the development of the next *PixelJunk* titles and enjoying every minute. 2009 looks like it is also going to be a really good *PixelJunk* year!"

Most Disappointing Game: Haze

Instead of an exclusive killer-app, we got a mediocre shooter, and all the Nectar in the world couldn't ease the pain of *Haze's* failure to live up to our expectations.



The Hottest Element of 2008: Fire

Forget about making a "splash," 2008 was all about the sizzling sparks of a good blaze. From *Far Cry 2's* lauded brushfires to *Alone in the Dark's* barbequed demons, from *Bioshock's* Incinerate! plasmid to the flamethrowers in *Call of Duty: World at War* or *Resistance 2,* pretty, pretty flames dominated the games in 2008.

FARMER'S MARKET

BEST MULTIPLAYER

RESISTANCE 2

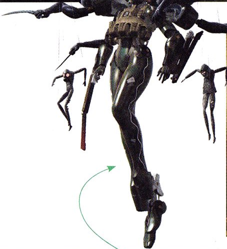
Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Insomniac Games

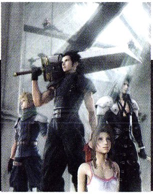
Accepted by Ted Price, President, Insomniac Games

"At the end of every production we always end up holding our breath, wondering whether the rest of the world will like what we've created. With *Resistance 2* we changed quite a lot, especially in the co-op and competitive multiplayer areas. So we're ecstatic about winning this award. For us it justifies the late nights spent trying to finish the game and the heated arguments over features. We really appreciate your support and we'll see you on the battlefield!"

In contrast to our music game category, selecting the best multiplayer game proved to be a nearly impossible task. Over the past several years, multiplayer in general has become an increasingly huge focus for most developers. Rarely will a game hit store shelves without some kind of multiplayer portion attached, which creates fierce competition among these releases and, subsequently, compels developers to invest more time and creativity into this aspect of their games. As a result, gamers are absolutely flooded with high-quality options (as evidenced by our ridiculously long and non-committal list of Honorable Mentions).

In the end, *Resistance 2* captured the flag because it really offers the full package. The co-op mode offers a campaign that's completely separate from the single-player story and changes the entire dynamic of the game (arguably for the better). The 60-player multiplayer is both a truly impressive technical achievement and excellent fun—despite the intermittent chaos. And in both cases, the opportunity to customize your abilities provides a welcome layer of depth and customization to the often-repetitive FPS genre. *Resistance 2's* multiplayer options are so comprehensive and so rewarding that we'd be remiss not to recognize their awesomeness.





Best Boss Battle: Psycho Mantis (Metal Gear Solid 4)
It's not just the return of an old "friend," but the execution of such a complex battle that requires you to have listened carefully to the instructions. You will remember this encounter, oh yes you will.

The Force Was *Almost* Strong Enough With This One: The Force Unleashed
Or, "The Just Short of Greatness Award." Proving that you can make a good *Star Wars* game that's also a canonical addition to the *Star Wars* lore, *Force Unleashed* falls short of its potential due to some goofy gameplay glitches that hamper the overall experience. Still good, but it should've been better. Here's hoping for a sequel...

The Made-Teresa-Cry Award: Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII
Other games came close, but the prequel to *the* game that defined Teresa's life (yes, you read that right!) was the only one to squeeze out the waterworks.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

LITTLEBIGPLANET

PUBLISHER: SCEA | **DEVELOPER:** MEDIA MOLECULE

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR GAMES | **DEVELOPER:** ROCKSTAR NORTH

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

PUBLISHER: KONAMI | **DEVELOPER:** KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

SOULCALIBUR IV

PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI | **DEVELOPER:** PROJECT SOUL

SAINTS ROW 2

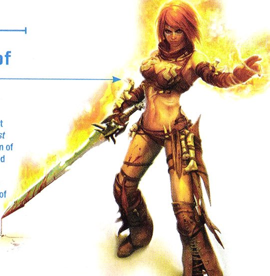
PUBLISHER: THQ | **DEVELOPER:** VOLITION

The Made-Roger-Cry Awards: Yakuza 2; Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway

There's really no way Roger can tell you why he cried during these games without unleashing a slew of spoilers. Just rest assured that *Yakuza 2* sports one of the best videogame storylines in memory centering on themes of honor, sacrifice, and just plain heartbreaking circumstance. Judged in its entirety, *Brothers In Arms'* story doesn't hold up as well, but there's this one scene that just epitomizes bro love…*sniff* It's okay, Roger, real men do cry. Real *girly* men, that is.

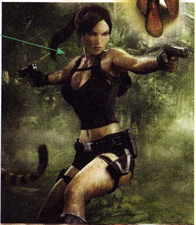
Roger's Game Babe of the Year: Tyris Flare

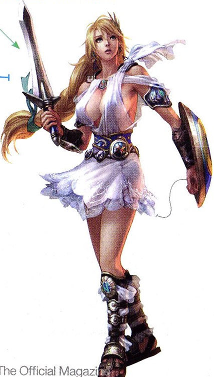
GOLDEN AXE: BEAST RIDER



Ironically, the shining light of Roger's cavalcade of depravity debuted in one of this year's darkest gaming moments: the abysmal *Golden Axe: Beast Rider.* (Roger never actually experienced the pain of playing the game because he couldn't get beyond staring at the box art.) But despite formidable competition, the newcomer Ms. Flare claims the dubious title of Roger' icky infatuation by virtue of his weakness for statuesque redheads sporting Bob-like hairstyle. Part warrior, part *Solid Gold* dancer, and part dominatrix, the sculpted Tyris knows how to handle bad boys…and Roger's been a *very* bad boy this year.

Honorable mentions:





LARA CROFT

TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD

She's an icon and a sex symbol, and always provides two good reasons for Roger to play any *Tomb Raider* game… Her intelligence and that siren song of an English accent, of course!

ELIKA

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Despite his male bravado, Roger appreciates a woman who's a true partner—someone who deftly and demurely assists in magical combat, but doesn't try to assume control of the TV remote.

SOPHITIA

SOULCALIBUR IV

Roger doesn't usually go for blondes, but Sophitia definitely pegs his MILFage meter, and by the looks of it, she's lactating as well. Props to any woman who can wear white and still look, er, athletic.

NAOMI

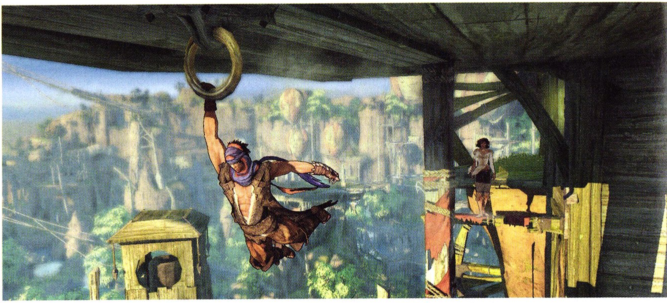
METAL GEAR SOLID 4

Want proof that Snake's the manliest badass ever? He actually manages to pay attention to what Naomi Hunter is saying while she slinks around in her coyishly unbuttoned lab coat. Or else he's blind in the eye without the patch as well.

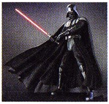
AERITH GAINSBOROUGH

CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII

Aerith stands in stark contrast to the overt sexuality of Roger's other selections, but he's enamored by her unaffected innocence and beauty. She's a delicate flower in a harsh, desperate world, and he aches to protect her from the storm.



BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE



Best Use of a Sith Lord: ***Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*** You start off slaughtering Wookiees as an obscenely powered-up Darth Vader. Later, you'll find yourself facing the Dark Lord in an intense boss battle fraught with daddy issues. These two scenarios are reason enough for any *Star Wars* fan to play *SW:TFU*.

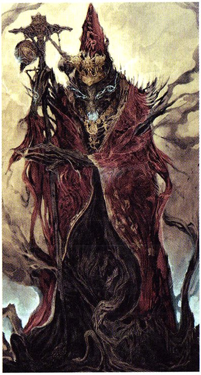
Worst Use of a Sith Lord: ***Soulcalibur IV*** So a lightweight cutiepie like Tira can wallop Darth Vader with her oversized hula hoops, causing the Dark Lord to slump to the floor in abject defeat. For shame.

Accepted by: Ben Mattes, Producer, Ubisoft Montreal

"There are very few rewards in game development more coveted then critical acclaim. Selling millions of copies is great, but I've always felt that it takes passionate players to give just reward to passionate developers. *Prince of Persia's* development was most definitively a labor of love for a passionate team, and no news that I've yet delivered to them has met with the amount of excitement as when we found out about this incredible award from PTOM.

We took a lot of risks on *Prince of Persia*—we took a well-known and loved franchise and core gameplay mechanic and spread our creative wings, changing elements some people considered untouchable. We did so always with the firm belief that we were moving the brand forward in a positive way, re-introducing the innovation, uniqueness, and sense of awe that helped make *Sands Of Time* so memorable.

To receive this award from PTOM means that there are people out there that agree with the decisions we made and therefore all of the tireless work was worth it. Nothing could mean more to us than that. Thank you."



PRINCE OF PERSIA

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Montreal

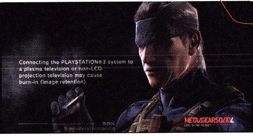
This award is not for the Prince, a lovable rapscallion whose dazzling feats of acrobatics and swordplay lend this game a palpable sense of grace and power. Nor is it for Elika, an AI-controlled companion character who redefines the phrase helping-hand. Nor is it for Ahriman, the dark god who has unleashed his icky Corruption throughout this fantastic world, providing a compelling challenge for players to overcome. It's not for the gorgeous "illustrative" graphics, the lush sound effects, the charming interaction between our dynamic duo, the open-world format that's tied together with a linear narrative (a significant achievement in and of itself). No, this award isn't for any of these accomplishments, remarkable as they may be. Instead, *Prince of Persia* takes home the trophy for one reason alone: fun. At a time when dark-and-gloomy is all the rage, when innovation often comes at the expense of enjoyment, *Prince of Persia* stands out thanks to its joyful approach to interactive entertainment. It may not be the toughest game, or the longest, or even the most original release in this category. But it is, from start to finish, one of the most enjoyable games we've played in a long while, with a Zen-like quality to the platforming and combat that keeps you in the groove, practically compelling you to continue playing for hours on end.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

MIRROR'S EDGE
PUBLISHER: EA | DEVELOPER: DICE

DEAD SPACE
PUBLISHER: EA | DEVELOPER: EA REDWOOD SHORES

The Best Way to Study for your History Exam Award: Civilization Revolution
If you were to fib, "But Ma, this *is* my history homework!" she might actually buy it if she sees you conquering your way through the decades in *Civilization Revolution*.



Connecting the PLAYSTATION®3 system to a plasma television or non-LCD projection television may cause burn-in (image retention).

Best Load Screen: Solid Snake smoking (Metal Gear Solid 4)
While *MGS4* installs on your hard drive, you're treated to an incredibly life-like Snake methodically smoking cigarette after cigarette while the game flashes a few mildly hilarious health advisories on screen. It's equal parts badass and bizarre, but more than that, it's freakin' awesome.

BEST RPG

FALLOUT 3

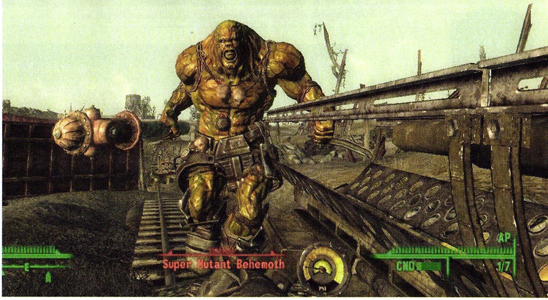
Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Developer: Bethesda Softworks

In a year where RPGs were rare and precious—we can count all the PS3 RPGs on the fingers of one hand—we were lucky. We might've settled for any old cubic zirconia…picked the best of the bunch to highlight as Best RPG. But we didn't have to: *Fallout 3* was like a brilliant diamond, a shining beacon in the barren playground. Sure, it had a few rough edges. That's the cost of the innovative combat system—a blend of first-person and turn-based—and the vast, immersive, adventure-filled world, where every step led to new quests, stories, and discoveries.

Fallout 3 is the clear winner because of the way it slowly sucked us in and forced us to make choices. Because of the way it molded us into citizens of the wastelands, whether good, evil, or a little bit of both. Because of the way it evoked emotions: compassion, grief, shock, despair, and delight. Because of its enjoyable combat and level-up system. Don't be misled by the lack of candidates in the RPG category; *Fallout 3* would be a treasured gem even in best of years.

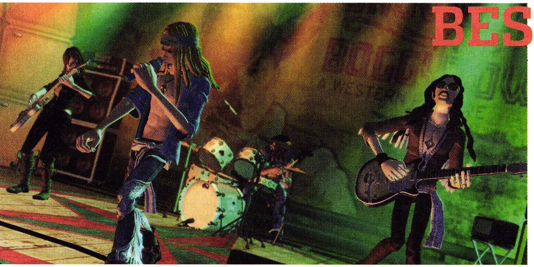
HONORABLE MENTION

VALKYRIA CHRONICLES
PUBLISHER: SEGA | DEVELOPER: SEGA



Accepted by Todd Howard, Executive Producer, Bethesda

"Thanks to the editors of PTOM and everyone who reads the mag for supporting *Fallout 3*. Our games sure take a while to make, and we love making them, so to get an award for doing what we already love, well that makes it even better. In a year of so many great games, we're honored to be singled out. Keep playing, and keep supporting the greatest entertainment on earth—videogames."



BEST MUSIC

ROCK BAND 2

Publisher: MTV Games
Developer: Harmonix

Picking winners is never easy. Differing opinions and firmly held beliefs often lead to raised voices and recriminations. Indeed, some of these categories were incredibly hard fought. This wasn't one of them. By perfecting the winning formula laid out in the original and delivering all the features the fans clamored for, *Rock Band 2* easily earned not just our enthusiastic adoration, but our pick for Best Music Game of the year.

What really makes it special, though, isn't the new full band online co-op or No Fail mode. It's the way you *feel* while playing it. *Rock Band 2* isn't about challenging you in the way that a traditional videogame might; it's about celebrating and immersing you in the music. By placing the emphasis solely on the music, it succeeds in making you feel like a rock star in a way that no other game has, whether you're playing by yourself or (even better) rocking out with friends. This unique and fulfilling sensation is what truly fuels our love of all things *Rock Band*.

Accepted by Helen McWilliams, Producer, Harmonix

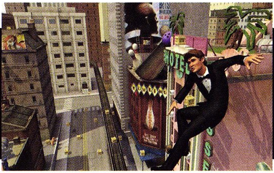
"Oh wow, man. We like…really didn't expect this. WOOOO! Thank you for voting *Rock Band 2* Best Music Game! We'd like to thank the big man in charge upstairs, you know…Alex Rigopulos! YEAH! Also, thank you to MTV Games! We'd also like to say thanks to our parents for ripping down our rock posters and complaining about the volume of our stereos because that only made us work harder! PA-CHOW! Thanks to all the fans! THIS IS FOR YOU GUYS!!! WOOO! BEST MUSIC GAME! Oh, oh, oh, and dude, sorry, one last thing I totally remembered—in the immortal words of the great Lemmy Kilmister: 'They've got the power now, but soon it's our hour now, we all know where we been, we all been LIVING TO WIN!!!!!'"

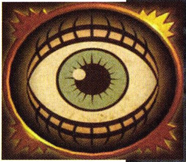
HONORABLE MENTION

SINGSTAR
PUBLISHER: SCEA
DEVELOPER: SCEE LONDON STUDIO

Best *Not* Game: Linger in Shadows
What do a flying dog, a lazy cat, and a cybernetic tentacle monster have in common? They all star in this high-end piece of interactive art that definitely is NOT a game. (But it *is* an opportunity to nab 16 Trophies in 15 minutes—excuse enough to justify the paltry $2.99 price of admission.)

Best Cameo: David Hasselhoff (PAIN: Movie Studio)
It's finally happened. The physical world has become too small to contain the megastarness that is, The Hoff. The media triple threat of actor, singer, and, er, all-around celebrityness-ness, *and* golden god to millions of Germans, has entered the cyber dimension with his appearance in *PAIN: Movie Studio*. Abusing The Hoff against the backdrop of the master covering Culture Club's "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?" So surreal, and yet, so very right.





BEST SHOOTER

Accepted by: Alyssa Finley, Executive Producer, 2K Marin

"We are humbled. Unbelievable, and wow—a huge thank you to the fans for supporting *BioShock,* to Sony for their support in making it great on the PS3, and last but absolutely not least to the incredible dev teams who worked incredibly hard to make the PS3 version happen. We promise that great things are in store for *BioShock 2.* We can't wait to show you more in the near future!"

BIOSHOCK

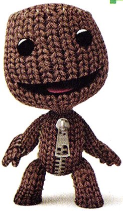
Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: 2K Marin, 2K Boston, 2K Australia, Digital Extremes

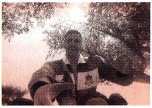
It's a testament to the vast (and successful) ambition of *BioShock* that the PTOM staff sat in a circle and debated for a good half-hour over whether the game is actually a shooter. Of course, the answer is yes. You walk around, in first-person perspective, with a physical weapon in one hand, a genetic enhancement surging through the other, blasting the bejesus out of everything that moves. If this isn't a shooter, than we don't know what is. And yet, *BioShock* is so much more than its genre descriptor. It's an immersive adventure, with a richly realized world full of shockingly detailed bits and bobs. It's a roleplaying game, where you develop your character in any number of directions and choice actually matters. It's a cinematic masterpiece, with dialogue worthy of the best motion pictures. It's a literary tour de force, with a story that is full of high-minded references and philosophical explorations. Then again, it's also a fast and frenetic shooter, intense and challenging, supremely fun. That's why it's not just a shooter, but it's the Best Shooter of 2008.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

FAR CRY 2
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT | DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL

CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION | DEVELOPER: TREYARCH





Most Beloved New Character: Sackboy (LittleBigPlanet)
Mario and Sonic served as the face and personality of their respective gaming eras, console systems, and companies. In Sackboy, Sony has finally found the iconic character that personifies the PlayStation experience. Perhaps most revealingly, Sony's new mascot is essentially a blank canvas compared to the fully realized personas of its progenitors. But when you can manage to get legions of bloodthirsty hardcore gamers to play dress-up doll (yes, that's what you're actually doing), well, that's star power.

Coolest Trophy So Far: "Good night sweet prince" (Far Cry 2)
The description is euphemistic enough make a funeral director blush: "Comfort a Buddy and ease his passing." In reality, the award is earned after an utterly gut-wrenching moment: You're leaning over a dying friend, desperately trying to save his (or her) life, only to give in and administer a lethal dose of merciful meds. Plink! You have earned a Trophy.

The Where-Is-It? Award: GPS on PSP
Seriously, where is it?

BEST DRIVING

BURNOUT PARADISE

Publisher: EA
Developer: Criterion Games

When *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue* can't even garner an honorable mention, you know it's been a great year for driving games. But despite *GRID's* inspired racing action and *Pure's* intoxicating off-road acrobatics, it's the immersive *Burnout Paradise* that takes the checkered flag in a photo finish. The astonishingly detailed Paradise City serves as *Burnout's* playground where it's up to you to decide which flavor of vehicular mayhem suits your mood of the moment. Racing, exploring, insane stunts, and of course, crashing: It's all here, and with Criterion's affinity for DLC, *Burnout Paradise* has set the driving game standard for years to come.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

GRID
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS | DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS STUDIOS

PURE
PUBLISHER: DISNEY INT. | DEVELOPER: BLACK ROCK STUDIOS

Accepted by Craig Sullivan, Creative Director, Criterion Games

"Thank you from everyone over here at Criterion Games in sunny Guildford, UK. We all read the magazine and it's an honor to have won such an important award, especially given the high standard of driving games released this year.

We had a great time making *Burnout Paradise* and since releasing the game back in January 2008 we've continued to support our players with lots of fun downloadable content. Thanks again to everyone who voted for us, everyone at *PlayStation: The Official Magazine*, and of course, all the *Burnout Paradise* players."

BEST FIGHTING

SOULCALIBUR IV

Publisher: Namco Bandai
Developer: Project Soul

Let's start with the eye-candy: From the stunning backgrounds to the big-breasted hotties (or the hunky Mitsurugi and well-packaged Voldo, if you prefer the company of men), *Soulcalibur IV* is drop-dead gorgeous. But the ogle factor isn't what wins *Soulcalibur IV* the award. Nor is it the Tower of Lost Souls single-player "campaign," the new online functionality, or the robust create-a-character that's almost a mini-game in itself. Instead, it's the fact that whenever we're not scrambling to meet deadlines and review new games, we still pull out *Soulcalibur IV* to engage in a few rounds of over-the-top, one-on-one mayhem. All these elements all come together to create a pick-up-and-play fighting experience that's engaging and addictive—enough so that we can even overlook the nonsensical storylines and the ridiculousness of the *Star Wars* characters!

HONORABLE MENTIONS

WWE: SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2009
PUBLISHER: THQ | DEVELOPER: YUKE'S

MORTAL KOMBAT VS. DC UNIVERSE
PUBLISHER: MIDWAY | DEVELOPER: MIDWAY

NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA STORM
PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI | DEVELOPER: CYBERCONNECT2

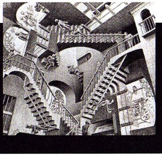
Accepted by Katsutoshi Sasaki, Director, Namco Bandai

"It is a great honor to receive the Best Fighting Game of 2008 award. We worked really hard to ensure that we could deliver new and exciting elements to the series and are very happy this honor represents all of our efforts. Providing the seamless online environment to all the players worldwide has been our biggest achievement. A big thanks to everyone!"

Best Weapon: Magnum (Resistance 2)
Regular fire a bullet from this beast into a Chimera skull and it's instant takedown. That's sweet enough. But when you pull the alt-fire trigger and explode each round? Now that's a takedown worth experiencing by any gamer.

The Two Wrongs Make a Right Award: Zombie Nazis multiplayer mode (Call Of Duty: World at War)
Zombies are evil. Nazis are evil. But combine the two together, and voilà, a multiplayer mode that is oh-so right.

The M.C. Escher Award: echochrome
Much like an art museum, *echochrome* doesn't exactly deliver a high-octane dose of fun and excitement, but its conceptual brilliance is still easy to appreciate. With its simple yet ingenious perspective-based puzzles, it changed the way we look at games…literally.



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GAMES OF THE YEAR '08

BEST ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Kojima Productions

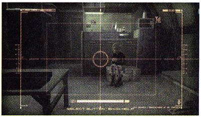
It's remarkably easy to keep gushing over *MGS4's* platform-shaping achievements in storytelling, production values, and memorable encounters. But it's worth remembering that at its heart, *MGS4* is a truly phenomenal action game. Whether you take the sneak-action route or the run-and-gun approach (good luck with that) the variation among the weapons and the ability to upgrade them means that you're always ideally equipped for any situation based on how you choose to attack it. Choices based on your preferred tactical approach, your personal sit-rep, or the tools at your disposal blend into an incredible battlefield dynamic, full of surprises and memorable moments. Action fans had plenty to like in 2008, but we'll absolutely stone-cold guarantee that they won't like many more than *MGS4.*

HONORABLE MENTIONS

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR GAMES | DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR NORTH

Accepted by Hideo Kojima, Studio Head, Kojima Productions

In case you happened to pass over it, see Pg. 44 for Mr. Kojima's acceptance speech for both Game of the Year and Best Action game categories. Aah, so many awards, so many speeches to write...



Best Game Ending:
Metal Gear Solid 4
Impeccable production values; complete closure on a chapter; nerve-wracking; enlightening; celebratory; stunning. For *MGS* fans (or just those that enjoyed completing this game) the Epilogue is *Cinema Paradiso.*

Worst Game Ending:
Metal Gear Solid 4
Long-winded; facile; convoluted and complicated; overwrought, overdramatic, overexposed; long, long, and too damn long.

One man's *Citizen Kane* is another man's *Plan 9 From Outer Space.* No powerful franchise-ending showcase can so polarize its fan base, but the intense scrutiny dissected every layer from the multi-faceted conclusion. The result? It's the best of endings, the worst of endings; oh just play the game and decide for yourself.

BEST SPORTS

Accepted by Phil Frazier, Senior Producer, EA Tiburon

"We're incredibly honored to receive this award. The entire team here at EA Tiburon worked hard to provide a realistic and adaptable NFL experience that anyone can enjoy. The fact that PTOM and our fans are enjoying our efforts is fantastic. Thank you so much for this recognition."

MADDEN NFL 09

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Tiburon

It's easy to overlook *Madden* with it being essentially the only NFL game in town *(Blitz* notwithstanding), and a legacy of incrementally tweaking its format for each annual iteration. But in 2008 the Tiburon team pulled out the stops both in the graphics enhancements that made the game more TV-like than ever before, and in the method of improving players' abilities. Not the in-game players, but yours. The *Tron*-athon playbook practice mode did more to make casual players better than any manual or video ever could. Even the most casual of Sunday afternoon armchair quarterbacks could now easily appreciate the subtle impact of running the 3-4 defense with a blitzing corner, and then adopt that knowledge to adapt their skills in the monumentally deep game modes. Like *Madden* needs more pats on the back, but when it's truly deserved, we're here to say that despite incredibly strong competition from *FIFA, NHL,* and 2K Sports' *NBA 2K9* this year, Madden gets it.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

FIFA SOCCER 09
PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS | DEVELOPER: EA CANADA

NHL 09
PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS | DEVELOPER: EA CANADA

NBA 2K9
PUBLISHER: 2K SPORTS | DEVELOPER: VISUAL CONCEPTS

ARMORED CORE FOR ANSWER

»

Best Voice Acting: Metal Gear Solid 4
David Hayter's delivery of Old Snake's cigarette-fueled rasp is pretty incredible in its range and power. Few will crawl through the late-level radiation-filled tunnel (oh, was that a spoiler? PLAY THE GAME ALREADY) without feeling every searing breath.

Worst Game of the Year: Mercenaries 2 (PS2)
Calling *Mercenaries 2* on the PS2 the worst "game" of the year may in fact be a bit charitable because it implies that the disc actually contains an entire game. In reality, *Mercs 2* is so hopelessly unfinished and fundamentally broken that it fails to even live up to the original game, much less to its more complete but still lackluster bigger brother on the PS3. (Check out GamesRadar.com for a video of some of the worst pop-in you'll ever see in a game…it'd be funny if it wasn't so pathetic.) This game absolutely should not have been released as is, but sadly, it was and that makes it our pick for 2008's worst game.

PlayStation.2
MERCENARIES 2
WORLD IN FLAMES

Most Ridiculous Subtitle of the Year: Armored Core: For Answer
For serious?

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Got a PSP gathering dust in the corner of your bedroom? Time to brush off the old gal and get her back into the action—especially with all the upcoming games and extra goodies you can enjoy in 2009. We've got our top picks over the next six pages, all of which are sure to help our favorite handheld have its best year yet!

PSP STRIKES BACK!

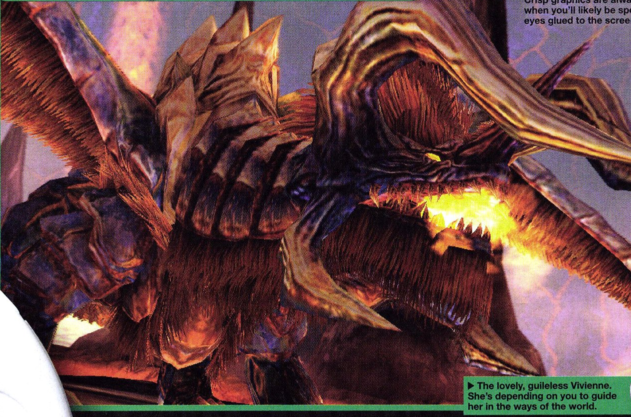
thunk
I TRUST YOU WILL FIND EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER.
his s s s
HOME
VOL
SELECT
START

NYC2123: Dayender, a digital comic created specifically for the PSP will entertain you *and* reassure you about the platform's future.

»by Teresa Dun

RELEASE: March | **GENRE:** Action RPG | **PUBLISHER:** Sega | **DEVELOPER:** Alfa System

Phantasy Star Portable



Crisp graphics are always refreshing, especially when you'll likely be spending long hours with eyes glued to the screen, dungeon crawling.

▶ The lovely, guileless Vivienne. She's depending on you to guide her in the ways of the world.

3/18
4/10
1/3
11/19
5/13
1/5
3/17

Knuckles
Amy
Sonic
Blaze
HP 104/104
169/169

Pannon LV1
Knuckles
Amy
Sonic
Blaze
HP 104/104
Tornado Break
Attack
169/169

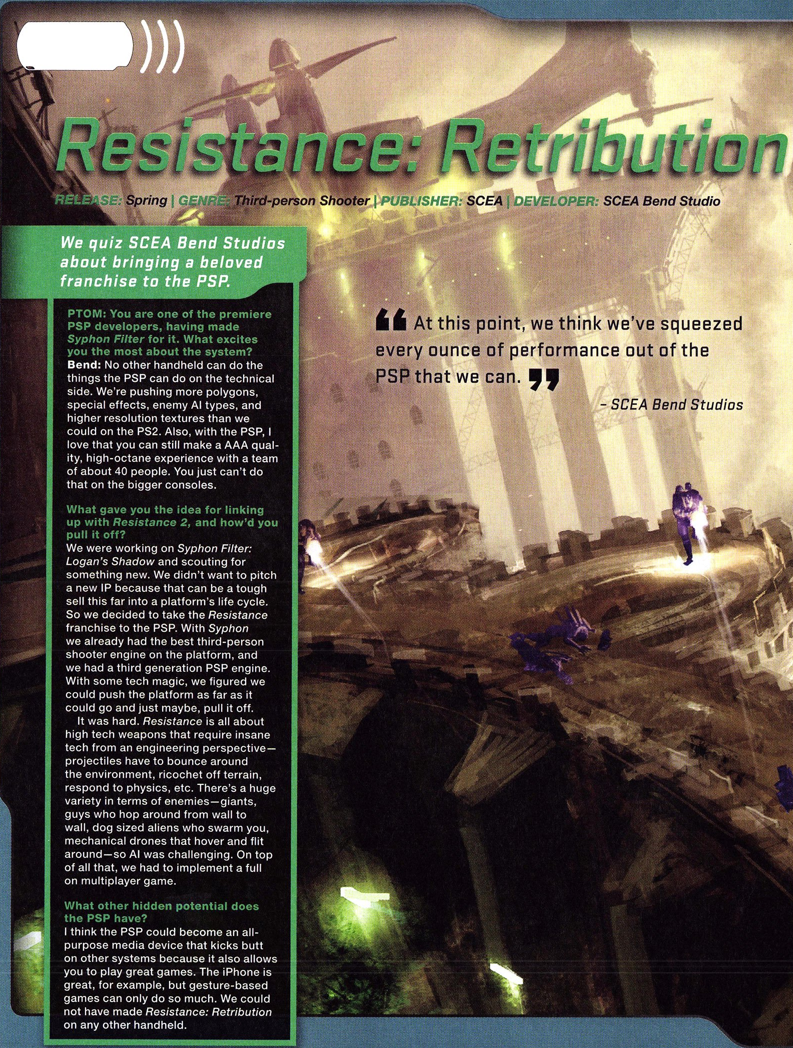
We're always happy to welcome a well-made RPG into the PlayStation fold. And if sales of 500,000 within the first few weeks of its Japanese release are any indication, we'd better start chilling the champagne and polishing the silverware for *Phantasy Star Portable's* March arrival.

The game is chronologically set between *Phantasy Star Universe* and its sequel *Phantasy Star Universe: Ambition of the Illuminus*. The SEED mess has been cleaned away—supposedly—and the world is at peace. But when odd disturbances start popping up, you're sent to investigate, and that's where the 15-plus hour main storyline begins.

Except you won't have to play that campaign—or the numerous side missions—alone. *Phantasy Star Portable* supports up to four players ad hoc. With three initial character classes (which of course eventually unlocks into another handful), four races (Human, Newman, CAST, and Beast), dozens of weapon types, an in-depth crafting system, and over 500 items, RPG lovers will have plenty to customize, tweak, and pursue.

A couple of new characters round out the familiar *Phantasy Star Universe* troupe, including an android named Vivienne. She's a new model, supposedly more "sensitive" than other CASTs, but still a "baby" in the world. Throughout the game, you'll be presented with dialogue branches to educate her about the nuances of human emotion—your choices affect the game's missions and ending.

We weren't blown away by the original *PSU* or by the wildly successful (Japan-side, at least) *Monster Hunter Freedom* (a game *Phantasy Star Portable* closely resembles), but this small-screened RPG might scratch an RPG itch that we've had ever since we put down *Crisis Core*. We'll have the champagne ready just in case.



Resistance: Retribution

RELEASE: Spring | **GENRE:** Third-person Shooter | **PUBLISHER:** SCEA | **DEVELOPER:** SCEA Bend Studio

We quiz SCEA Bend Studios about bringing a beloved franchise to the PSP.

PTOM: You are one of the premiere PSP developers, having made *Syphon Filter* for it. What excites you the most about the system?

Bend: No other handheld can do the things the PSP can do on the technical side. We're pushing more polygons, special effects, enemy AI types, and higher resolution textures than we could on the PS2. Also, with the PSP, I love that you can still make a AAA quality, high-octane experience with a team of about 40 people. You just can't do that on the bigger consoles.

What gave you the idea for linking up with *Resistance 2,* and how'd you pull it off?

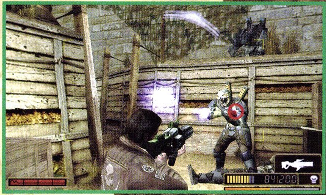
We were working on *Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow* and scouting for something new. We didn't want to pitch a new IP because that can be a tough sell this far into a platform's life cycle. So we decided to take the *Resistance* franchise to the PSP. With *Syphon* we already had the best third-person shooter engine on the platform, and we had a third generation PSP engine. With some tech magic, we figured we could push the platform as far as it could go and just maybe, pull it off.

It was hard. *Resistance* is all about high tech weapons that require insane tech from an engineering perspective—projectiles have to bounce around the environment, ricochet off terrain, respond to physics, etc. There's a huge variety in terms of enemies—giants, guys who hop around from wall to wall, dog sized aliens who swarm you, mechanical drones that hover and flit around—so AI was challenging. On top of all that, we had to implement a full on multiplayer game.

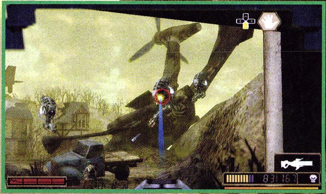
What other hidden potential does the PSP have?

I think the PSP could become an all-purpose media device that kicks butt on other systems because it also allows you to play great games. The iPhone is great, for example, but gesture-based games can only do so much. We could not have made *Resistance: Retribution* on any other handheld.

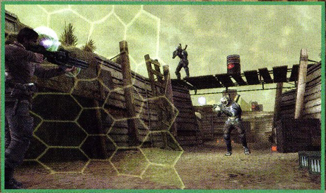
> “At this point, we think we've squeezed every ounce of performance out of the PSP that we can.”
>
> *– SCEA Bend Studios*



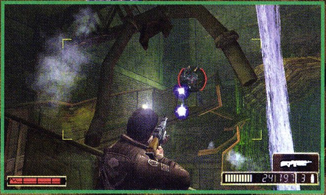
The slick targeting system should make for a smoother PSP shooting experience.



Levels are large, detailed, with huge vistas.



Shields and conveniently placed exploding barrels should be key considerations in your strategizing.

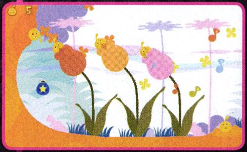


Use the slightly more generous sight to your advantage.

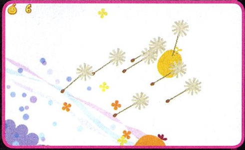
RELEASE: **February** | *GENRE:* **Action/Platforming**
PUBLISHER: **SCEA** | *DEVELOPER:* **SCE Japan**

LocoRoco 2

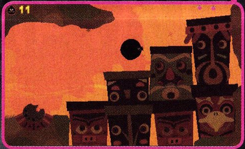
On-the-go perfection, that's what the first *LocoRoco* felt like with its upbeat music, quick gameplay, and vibrant imagery. It was oddness embodied, from the concept—a platformer where you move the world, not the characters—to the character design—the little LocoRocos can meld into one fat glob or split into little spheres. With around two dozen new stages, several new minigames, multiplayer ad hoc support, and even *more* new hidden areas to discover, we can't wait to delve into this unusual universe once again.



Yay! Flowers, and colors, and music! Aren't you happy just looking at it?



Okay, so maybe the over-the-top sugary sweetness isn't your thing...



So does this (slightly) more somber scene suit you better? Grinch.

Your PSP Can Make You Smart(er)!

HOW? By giving you an edumacation in classic literature! Here's how to use your PSP as an ebook reader.

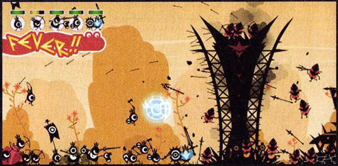
STEP ONE: Download JpegBook on your PC. (Sorry, won't work for Macs.) Google it to find it.

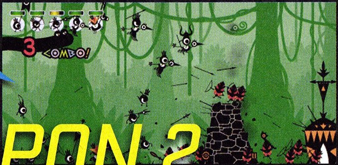
STEP TWO: Go to **www.gutenberg.org** and find a book worth reading. Download the plain text version of the book.

STEP THREE: Use Jpegbook to transform the text document into PSP-sized Jpegs.

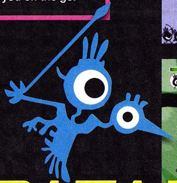
STEP FOUR: Upload the Jpegs onto your PSP memory card via a USB cable.

STEP FIVE: Access the ebook through the photo tab, and voilà, you've got some smartifying reads to take with you on the go!





"Fever"-ish, non-stop action in the literal sense, since stopping means you'll lose the beat.



PATAPON 2

RELEASE: 2009 | *GENRE:* STRATEGY/PUZZLE | *PUBLISHER:* SCEA | *DEVELOPER:* SCE Japan

Better start exercising your right thumb, because when *Patapon 2* is released, you'll need that digit in tiptop shape to pound that *Pata Pata Pata Pon* drumbeat and lead the one-eyed Patapon buggers to victory. The big deal this time around? More enemies, more Patapon types, and multiplayer support! Next time we see an infomercial for a thumb-sized treadmill, we're buying.

REMOTE PLAY

We've touted the benefits of the PSP's integration with the PS3 several times already, but it's worth mentioning again, especially since it's such a cool benefit that's so easily overlooked by plenty of gamers. So, once again for good measure, three of our favorite ways to harness to the power of your PSP on the go.

1. STREAMING MEDIA

Y'know that one photo of yourself eating the world's largest hamburger—all 123 pounds at Denny's Beer Barrel Pub in Pennsylvania… Well, no longer do you have to find the print or even load it up onto your memory stick. Instead, you can stream the photo straight from your PS3 or PC! Same goes for music or other streaming media. All you need to do is make sure you systems are linked up, and you're good to go.

2. PLAY PSN GAMES ON YOUR PSP

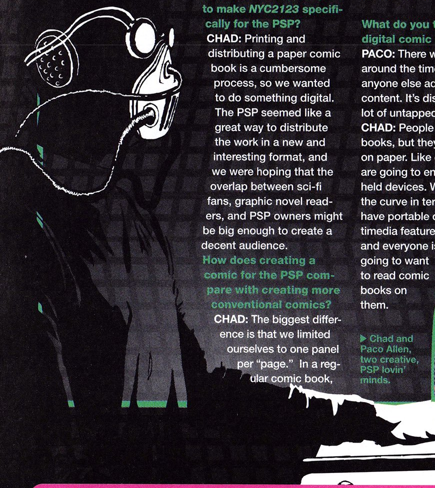
Not every game supports this feature, which is a shame because titles like *PixelJunk Monsters* are perfect for the PSP. Free up the TV so the wife can watch Oprah while you're sitting on the couch building towers to slay the monster onslaught.

3. SHOP ON THE GO

Now that you can access the PlayStation store from your PSP, you can easily shop for PS3 goodies while on the road, then set up a download remotely so your next purchase is ready and waiting on your console when you get home.

Digital PSP Comics

Chances are, you missed this little digital treasure when it came out a few years ago. It's a cyberpunk-flavored comic designed specifically for the PSP! We talked with Paco and Chad Allen, the brothers who created *NYC2123: Dayender,* to get their thoughts on the challenges of using the PSP as a comic medium and the future of digital comics. Download *NYC2123: Dayender* at **http://nyc2123.com/.**



PTOM: What inspired you to make *NYC2123* specifically for the PSP?

CHAD: Printing and distributing a paper comic book is a cumbersome process, so we wanted to do something digital. The PSP seemed like a great way to distribute the work in a new and interesting format, and we were hoping that the overlap between sci-fi fans, graphic novel readers, and PSP owners might be big enough to create a decent audience.

How does creating a comic for the PSP compare with creating more conventional comics?

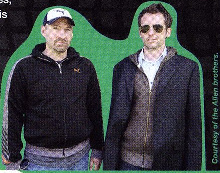
CHAD: The biggest difference is that we limited ourselves to one panel per "page." In a regular comic book, the size, shape and arrangement of panels is one of the key tools that the author has to help drive the narrative. Dialing down to a single panel per page changes the way you think about the words and the illustrations.

PACO: It gave us some unique opportunities. The PSP has a beautiful display with great contrast, so I was really happy with the way the black-and-white illustrations looked. And the way you toggle from image to image allowed us to do some flipbook style animation during some of the action sequences. For better or worse, it wouldn't have turned out the way it did if we hadn't done it on the PSP.

What do you think about the fact that the PSP digital comic scene is so dead today?

PACO: There were a few people doing small projects around the time we made *NYC2123.* But, we never saw anyone else adopt the PSP as a platform for this type of content. It's disappointing, because I think it still has a lot of untapped potential.

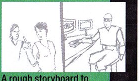
CHAD: People are not going to stop reading comic books, but they will stop reading comic books printed on paper. Like every other kind of content, comic books are going to end up being consumed primarily on handheld devices. We're also still at the very beginning of the curve in terms of the hardware—in a few years you'll have portable devices with awesome displays and multimedia features, and everyone is going to want to read comic books on them.



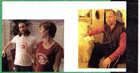
Courtesy of the Allen brothers.

▶ Chad and Paco Allen, two creative, PSP lovin' minds.

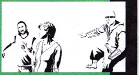
Five Steps to making a PSP Comic Panel



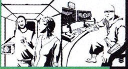
A rough storyboard to be used to direct the photo shoot.



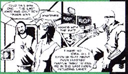
The photo shoot.



Character illustrations, with costumes.



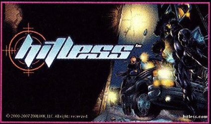
Backgrounds and props added.



Text bubbles, dialogue, and frame borders added.

Hooked on PSP Comics?

Here are a few others we recommend.


hitless™
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hitless.com

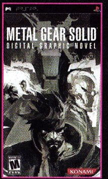
HITLESS

WHAT: A digital comic tweaked for the PSP.
WHERE: www.hitless.com/shell.html
BUT: Only the first two chapters are complete.

gomanga.com
home of seven seas entertainment on the we

MANGA

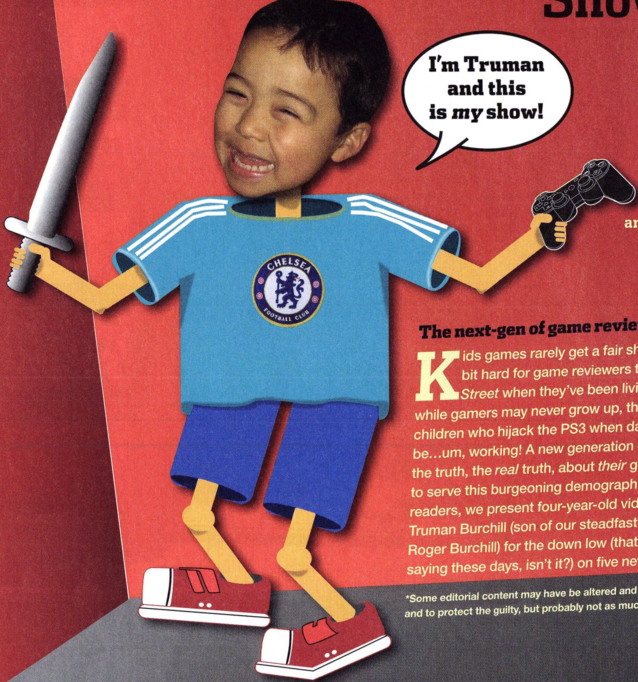
WHAT: Free Samples of the first few chapters of various mangas. The publishers make them available to tease you into purchasing the full books.
WHERE: www.gomanga.com/pspmanga/index.php, http://www.komikwerks.com/psp/
BUT: They're not formatted for the PSP's screen, so be prepared to zoom in and scroll.



METAL GEAR SOLID: DIGITAL GRAPHIC NOVEL

WHAT: An interactive UMD version of the story from the first *MGS* game where you can watch the comic unfold, and pause mid-action to track down "memories" hidden in the scenes.
WHERE: Online retailer or hardcore *MGS* fan's PSP collection.
BUT: You'll have a hard time tracking this UMB down! We saw it used on Amazon for 20 bucks…and new for 50!

The TrumAn Show


I'm Truman and this is *my* show!

>>by Truman and Roger Burchill

The next-gen of game reviewers has arrived

Kids games rarely get a fair shake. After all, it's a bit hard for game reviewers to appreciate *Sesame Street* when they've been living on *Saints Row.* But while gamers may never grow up, they do have children—children who hijack the PS3 when daddy's supposed to be…um, working! A new generation of gamers demanding the truth, the *real* truth, about *their* games. In an effort to serve this burgeoning demographic of new PTOM readers, we present four-year-old videogame prodigy, Truman Burchill (son of our steadfast Managing Editor, Roger Burchill) for the down low (that is what the kids are saying these days, isn't it?) on five new kids games.*

*Some editorial content may have be altered and embellished for effect and to protect the guilty, but probably not as much as you'd think.

Bad Daddy

Videogames are frequently cited as a bad influence on kids, but at PTOM we believe it's the parents' privilege and responsibility to decide what is, and isn't appropriate entertainment for their children. But what happens when the parent is a gamer? Here's a game-by-game recap of Roger serving as Truman's role model. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

BOLT
"[Censored] Arrrgh! [Expletive Deleted]!!!"

DORA SAVES THE SNOW PRINCESS
"Did daddy ever tell you the story about the night I got to be a pretty princess?"

GO DIEGO GO!: GREAT DINOSAUR RESCUE
"Hey, Diego's sister Alicia is sort of *caliente*… Don't tell mommy I said that."

BEN 10: ALIEN FORCE
"Sheesh, how many anal probes did this guy have to get 10 aliens in him… What, Truman? I said, "anaaaal"—it's French for butt."

MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA
"'*You got to move it, move it… You got to… move it!*' Yes, m'boy, it's with moves like that that daddy turned mommy into a mommy."

PLAYSTATION 3
Walt Disney
BOLT

Bolt

PS3 MSRP: $49.98 **ESRB:** EVERYONE 10+ **PUBLISHER:** DISNEY INTERACTIVE **DEVELOPER:** AVALANCHE SOFTWARE

In the Disney movie, Bolt is a canine superhero who's unaware that he's merely an actor in a TV action series. In the game, you play out episodes of the fictional in-film TV show as Bolt and his owner, Penny. Alternate-reality-dimension-tearing implications aside, this PS3 game has the gameplay and depth to challenge veteran gamers and is Truman's favorite game of this litter. But some sections are so challenging that most kids won't be able to complete the game without parental assistance.

+ Bolt's supercharged bite-'em-up action; Penny's stealthy infiltration adventures; polished presentation

– No co-op mode means you'll be playing while your kids are watching; occasional extreme difficulty

Tru-ism: "I like everything: When Penny sneaks up on the bad guys…and kicks their butt. When Bolt fights and bites them…in the butt. Penny's cute, huh, daddy?"

Dora the Explorer: Dora Saves the Snow Princess

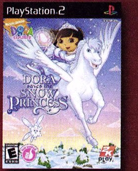
PS2 MSRP: $19.98 **ESRB:** EVERYONE **PUBLISHER:** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE **DEVELOPER:** HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE

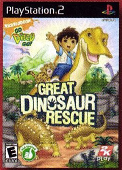
Help Dora and Boots save the Snow Princess and the Snowy Forest from the clutches of an evil witch! Aimed at pre-school age kids, *Snow Princess* offers minimal difficulty but is a great introduction to gaming for young novices. It'll probably be the first game they'll be able to play through alone, but a second controller Helper Feature allows grown-ups to join in and assist if needed. According to Truman, Dora edged out Diego because, "The ladies love my doughnuts." Um, okay.

+ Looks and sounds like the cartoon; non-violent kid-safe content; easy-peasy gameplay; nice price

– The creepy way Dora stares and waits for an answer when she asks a question; short game length

Tru-ism: "I'm a pretty princess! I'm a pretty princess!"





Go Diego Go!: Great Dinosaur Rescue

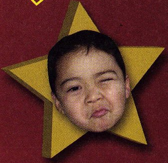
PS2 MSRP: $19.98 **ESRB:** EVERYONE **PUBLISHER:** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE **DEVELOPER:** HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE

The bilingual alternative for cootie-hatin' boy adventurers, Diego returns to the PS2 with a time-travelling prehistoric quest to save Maia the lost dinosaur. *Dinosaur Rescue* offers a smidge more challenge than Dora's *Snow Princess*, but this too is a low-difficulty "interactive" cartoon for uber-young gamers. Truman rates *Dinosaur Rescue* number three, but his interest in the game runs concurrent with his interest in the Diego TV show, which may disappear like the rain forests in a few short months.

+ Looks and sounds like the cartoon; mildly educational; non-violent kid-safe content; nice price

– How Baby Jaguar can weirdly speak when you'd prefer he just purr; "Freeze bobbos!"

Tru-ism: "I want Diego's backpack to…die!"



Ben 10: Alien Force

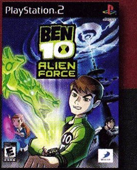
PS2 MSRP: $29.98 **ESRB:** EVERYONE 10+ **PUBLISHER:** D3PUBLISHER **DEVELOPER:** VICIOUS CYCLE SOFTWARE

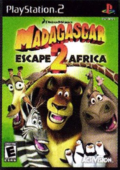
The *Ben 10: Alien Force* game revolves around the first season of the animated TV series about a form-shifting teen battling alien bad guys. Truman was enamored by Ben's ability to change into 10 different alien forms during combat, but his interest didn't extend much past the repetitive beat-'em-up action sequences. Older kids might fare better with *Ben 10*'s adventure/platforming segments, but when a combat fanatic like Truman ranks a game like this fourth, it's not a good sign.

+ Mix of action, platforming, and puzzle-solving gameplay; two-player co-op; multiple alien personalities

– Gratuitous animated violence; snippy teen attitude; game difficulty exceeds show's core age demographic

Tru-ism: "I say: 'It was funny and hilarious!' Not."





Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa

PS2 MSRP: $39.98 **ESRB:** EVERYONE **PUBLISHER:** ACTIVISION **DEVELOPER:** IDOL MINDS

While *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa* offers the most gameplay variety and depth of this menagerie, much like King Julien, it might be a case of too much being too much. The fast-talking Julien proved a humorous diversion for adults watching the *Madagascar 2* film, but he confused and irritated Truman to no end: "I don't understand what that monkey says…ever." King Julien's return as MC in the game pains Truman, but it's the seemingly endless parade of unremarkable play styles and clichéd levels that make him long to escape the deepest, darkest jungles of Madagascar.

+ The generally entertaining source material; gameplay variety; penguins are always funny

– King Julien; technically unpolished and buggy; the generous abundance of mediocre gameplay

Tru-ism: "It wasn't fun. I thought you didn't die in this game, but I wanted to die."

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Reviews

Scores | Analysis | Buying Advice

RATINGS

★★★★★ LEGENDARY
A game so amazing, the entire PTOM staff recommends it. A must buy!

★★★★½ SUPERB
Not quite a timeless classic, but one of the finest of its breed.

★★★★ GREAT!
A finely crafted, thoroughly enjoyable experience. Worth your time and money.

★★★½ SOLID
A strong game. We noticed some flaws, but there's more to like than loathe.

★★★ ENJOYABLE
If the topic/license/style is your thing, there's enough to keep you entertained.

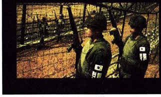
★★½ MEDIOCRE
An equal blend of sweet and sour. Discerning gamers can find better.

★★ SCARRED
A smattering of entertainment hidden amongst an abundance of flaws.

★½ FRUSTRATING
"Argh!" will be the self-created soundtrack of this game. No thank you.

★ PAINFUL
We played it so you don't have to. Now you owe us cookies.

½ BROKEN
Hey, it comes in a free plastic box! Wee!



Three of these things are sort of like the other... Can you figure out the link and what inspired the grouping? Email your answers with "Now Entering" in the subject line to PTOM_Letters@futureus.com.

Hot 5 List Top Picks from the Last Five Issues

1) **Killzone 2** p 32
2) **Prince of Persia** | PS3 | Jan 08 ★★★★½
3) **LittleBigPlanet** | PS3 | Holiday 08 ★★★★★
4) **Valkyria Chronicles** | PS3 | Dec 08 ★★★★½
5) **BioShock** | PS3 | Nov 08 ★★★★★

Meet the experts delivering your buying advice

It's Game of the Year time. The PTOM team reveal their sometimes surprising personal favorites.

ROB SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rob just can't get away from it. With time the single most important commodity we have, the fact that he finished *Metal Gear Solid 4* twice, and is 70-percent of the way through a third playthrough should be all the evidence needed to confirm Rob's pick for favorite game of the year. Actually, we think he might be having an affair with Naomi Hunter. For shame, Rob.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: *LittleBigPlanet, Grand Theft Auto IV*

TERESA DUN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tortuous. Picking *one* favorite game is like going to the world's fanciest buffet but only being allowed to taste one item. What to choose? The poignant, delicate *Crisis Core* or the crisp, bite-sized *God of War: Chains of Olympus?* The rich, robust *Fallout 3* or the heavenly *Soulcalibur IV?* It's too hard! So Teresa uses her go-to answer: *PixelJunk Monsters.* Ah, that's love.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: *God of War: Chains of Olympus, Metal Gear Solid 4*

KEN BOUSQUET
ART DIRECTOR

Was there ever any doubt what Ken's selection would be? There's love of family, love of God, love of country, and of course, love of soccer. For Ken, the only real contender to the beautiful game is family...maybe. As such, there can be no other possible selection than *FIFA Soccer 09.* You can almost count the passing of the years by the changing of the digits on the FIFA game box on Ken's desk. So reassuring.

HONARABLE MENTIONS: *Soulcalibur IV, Burnout Paradise*

GARY STEINMAN
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Gary tried. He really did. He lobbied. He cajoled. He whined. He shouted. He even wrote it in as the winner on the Game of the Year Excel spreadsheet, which Rob immediately changed. Indeed, like a blade of wheat in a howling windstorm, he was blown over by the mighty surge of love for *Fallout 3,* which stole the RPG award from his favorite game of 2008, *Valkyria Chronicles.*

HONORABLE MENTIONS: *Prince of Persia, BioShock*

ROGER BURCHILL
MANAGING EDITOR

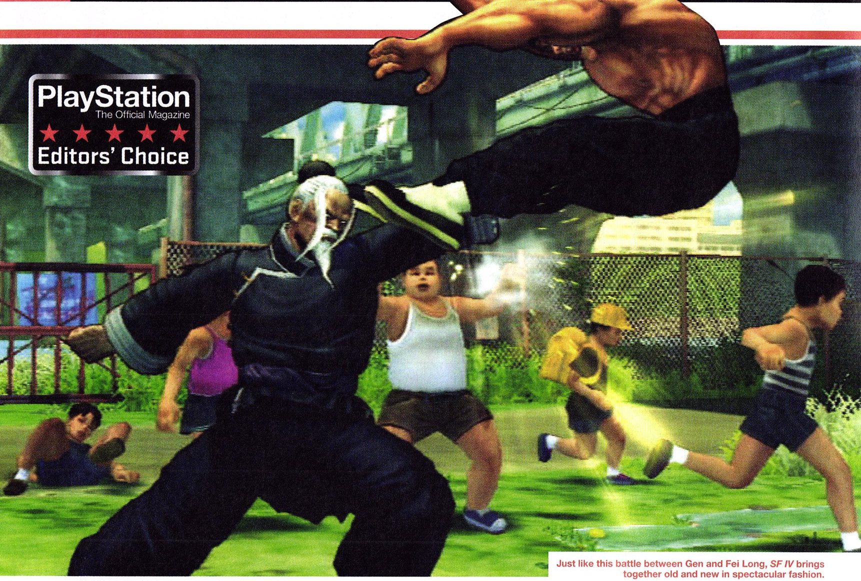
Since the most obvious great games of 2008 have received their just due in the Awards feature or by his fellow editors here, Roger picks *LEGO Batman.* Why? Because the game's superb co-op play allowed for so many fun-filled hours of bonding with his son, Truman. Someday, they may even finish the game—once Truman quits refusing to play the villains' storylines.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: *Yakuza 2, PAIN: Amusement Park; PAIN: Movie Studio*

SCOTT BUTTERWORTH
ASSISTANT EDITOR

BioShock. That's right, Scott picked *BioShock.* Yes, it came out on that other system first, and yes, it's old news to most of the world, but hey, why should that matter? For fans of FPSs, *BioShock* offered an experience unlike any other. Not only was the gameplay incredibly deep and unique, the captivating story represents one of the most fully realized worlds ever created in a videogame. Sorry, Snake.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: *Metal Gear Solid 4, Fallout 3, Rock Band 2*



PlayStation The Official Magazine
★★★★★
Editors' Choice

Just like this battle between Gen and Fei Long, *SF IV* brings together old and new in spectacular fashion.

PS3 | R

Street Fighter IV

Think of it as 240 quarters well spent

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Capcom DEVELOPER: Capcom

What was the last game you were truly addicted to? I'm not talking about games you enjoyed enough to play through twice. I mean games you played until sunrise without even realizing the sun went down. You know the feeling? Well that's the sensation that washed over me after sitting down with *Street Fighter IV.* And though it's deeply rooted in the tradition and style of *Street Fighter II Turbo*—a game that I love dearly—this wasn't misplaced nostalgia overriding my better judgment. The game's flawless marriage of familiar gameplay and fresh ideas makes for a new experience that's overflowing with addictive arcade fun, and I can't help but fall in love all over again.

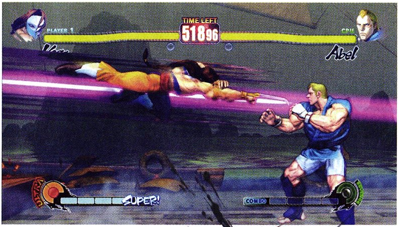
All Fired Up

The impressively smooth graphics and extreme level of polish strike you first, but the real star of this show is the gameplay. At its core, the fighting mechanics feel similar to those established in *SF II,* only faster, deeper, and more eye-popping thanks to the *sumi-e* inspired art brush flairs, fluid character animations, and well-timed dynamic camera work. It's like stepping into a sparkling new pair of the same tired shoes you've grown to love: comfy, but with marked improvements.

Classic characters will feel instantly familiar to veterans. Most fighters' original movesets have been left unaltered (assuming you paid attention to *Alpha* and *SF III),* with the exception of a few necessary refinements to some characters' control schemes.

And with everything from cancels and combos to dashes and throws, the combat still holds an incredible amount of depth and complexity… and it's as fun as ever.

The new characters, on the other hand, take time to appreciate, but I've found exploring their abilities to be rewarding and enjoyable. Actually, the roster as a whole (see New Kids sidebar) offers an impressive



Is Abel about to get a face full of claw or will he execute his anti-air grab in time?!

diversity of both personalities and fighting styles, each with its own idiosyncrasies that you must know intimately in order to maximize the potential of the corresponding combatant. No sane fighting fan could be unsatisfied with the variety or depth of the available fighters.

Then, there's the game's overhauled system of special moves. The Focus Attacks create new strategic possibilities; the revamped EX Specials give you more moves (and more power); and the fantastic Ultras not only alter the dynamic of every fight, but can result in some pretty spectacular finishes too (see Fire Away sidebar for full details).

You might think all these newfangled tweaks sound convoluted, but in practice, they feel entirely natural—thanks to the simple, logical button combinations used to execute them and their seamless integration into the bigger system. Also, health bars seem to hold out a lot longer than in *SF II,* leading to lengthier fights and generally more aggressive gameplay. And by making all of these moves easy to execute, the developers elegantly balance hardcore mechanics with simplicity, making the game accessible to beginners but deep enough for hardcore players. There's still room for buttonmashing, but why would you?

The One-Two Punch

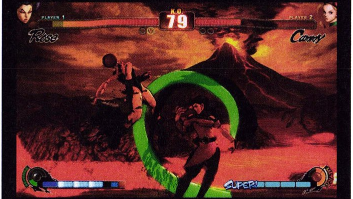
Despite all of these flashy new special attacks, *SF IV's* heart lies, as always, with combos. Oh sure, barbecuing your opponents with Yoga Flame might look sweet, but it will never be as useful as a well-timed string of attacks. Thankfully, you don't have to spend hours upon hours trying to uncover the best sets of moves on your own; the incredibly helpful Trial Mode walks you through them step by step. But even with your hand firmly held, accurately executing some combos can be a nearly impossible task.

In fact, the learning curve for expert techniques is steep. Tremendously steep and often frustrating, thanks to the demanding timing. For casual players who don't want to invest their entire lives into this game but would still like to beat buttonmashers, it's easy to feel as if attempts to progress are futile.

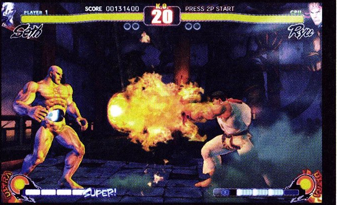
However, harsh as this may sound, this degree of difficulty is the sign of a good fighting game because it means there's depth and challenge. It also means that players with genuine skill and commitment are rewarded with a legitimate feeling of accomplishment and that competition has real meaning. Plus, even if you aren't an expert, *SF IV* can be (or rather, *is*) incredibly fun. As long as you can swallow your pride, even the easiest difficulty setting puts ➔

Fire Away

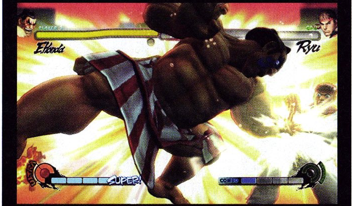
While the Specials and Supers of *Street Fighter II Turbo* remain intact, *SF IV* adds a set of power-up moves that might be unfamiliar to the great many of you who skipped *SF III* and *Alpha.* Here's the quick and dirty:



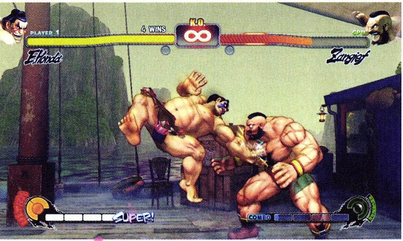
FOCUS ATTACKS: Focus Attacks open up all kinds of new opportunities for strategy. Though the attack itself is simple—tap the Mid-kick and Punch buttons simultaneously for a quick attack or hold them to charge up for an unblockable stun maneuver (itself a fresh and useful ability)—it can be used to cancel animations or to chain moves together to create combos.



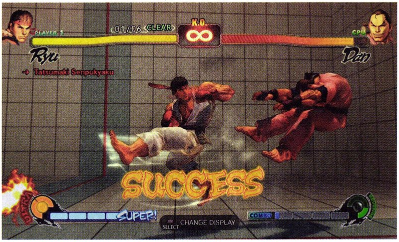
EX SPECIALS: The EX Specials—introduced during the *Street Fighter III* era and therefore not entirely novel—occasionally alter a character's special attacks in creative ways, thereby giving you more strategic tools to employ during your fights. For example, Ryu's EX Hurricane Kick spins rapidly in place rather than diving across the screen. For players who never moved on from *SF II,* this alone provides some revolutionary new possibilities.



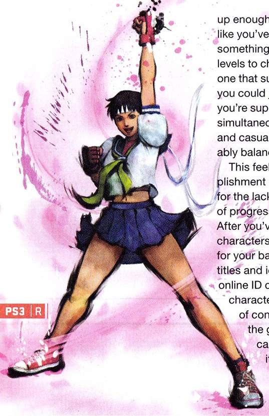
ULTRAS: The relentlessly awesome Ultras are elaborate, cinematic instant-combos that deliver the most powerful punch in the game. Since they're fueled by the new Revenge Meter—which gradually fills as you take damage—they offer the losing player a chance to make a comeback. This smartly balances out the power of the games multiple other special attacks, all of which are fueled by a gauge that builds as you deal damage rather than sustain it.



Stages range from crowded city streets to quiet fishing boats.



The all-new Trial mode will teach you everything you need to know about your fighter.



PS3 | R

up enough of a fight to make you feel like you've actually accomplished something. And with eight difficulty levels to choose from, finding the one that suits you should be cake (or you could just play your friends like you're supposed to). It's difficult to simultaneously please both hardcore and casual fans, but *SF IV* respectably balances the two dynamics.

This feeling of reward and accomplishment also helps to compensate for the lack of any tangible sense of progression in the Arcade Mode. After you've unlocked all of the characters, all you can hope to earn for your battles against the CPU are titles and icons to display on your online ID card, new colors for the characters' uniforms, or pieces of concept art to check out in the gallery. Big, giant "Who cares?!" Since none of these items actually *do* anything, playing alone can feel unfulfilling.

And just in case you were considering having a go at Arcade Mode anyway, the narrative cutscenes are rivaled only by under-funded Saturday morning cartoons in terms of quality (though you're totally in the wrong genre if you're looking for story), and the final boss, Seth, is easily one of the most aggravating bosses ever. Ever! Whether he's spamming a ranged attack or simply teleporting behind you for an instant throw, he's about as much fun as hot sauce in your eye. Just knowing I'll have to fight that Dr. Manhattan wanna-be is enough to keep me off Arcade Mode for good (note: hyperbole may be the result of my powerless rage).

But *Street Fighter* has never been about the single-player experience. As with nearly all fighting games, the entire point is to build your skills and fight your friends. And in that regard, *SF IV* kicks asses and takes names, making its single-player sins almost completely forgivable. Naturally, it owes this almost entirely to its skill-based (and let's not forget *fun)* gameplay, but the multiplayer options offer solid support. Local multiplayer is thoroughly adequate, keeping a running score and stat total while letting you select instant rematches or new characters in between matches. Online options are equally acceptable: you can adjust search settings by skill, language, and best connection, and adjust match parameters like rounds, time limit, and handicap. It's nothing special, but it gets the job done.

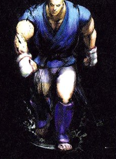
By striking a balance between fresh and familiar, and by delivering the best aspects of *Street Fighters* past, *Street Fighter IV* is easily one of this console generation's best fighting games. It's not without minor flaws, but it's a proud addition to the *Street Fighter* legacy that fighting fans will love.

Scott Butterworth

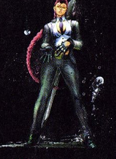
★★★★★

New Kids on the Block

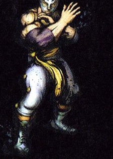
Meet the six new fighters joining the *Street Fighter* ranks! And just so you know, here's the rest of the *SF IV* roster: Akuma, Balrog, Blanka, Cammy, Chun-Li, Dan, Dhalsim, E. Honda, Fei Long, Gen, Guile, Ken, M. Bison, Rose, Ryu, Sagat, Sakura, Vega, and Zangief.



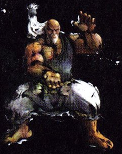
NAME: Abel
FOR FANS OF: Sagat, Balrog
BIO: A French amnesiac who uses mixed martial arts and has no projectile attacks.



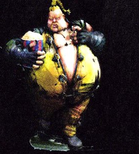
NAME: Crimson Viper
FOR FANS OF: Sakura, Dhalsim
BIO: An American secret agent who uses technology to shock and burn her foes.



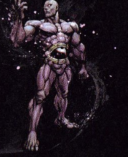
NAME: El Fuerte
FOR FANS OF: Zangief, Vega
BIO: A Mexican luchador/chef who relies on a goofy run and elaborate grabs.



NAME: Gouken
FOR FANS OF: Akuma, Ryu
BIO: Ryu and Ken's master who, naturally, plays like a more unique version of both.



NAME: Rufus
FOR FANS OF: Chun-Li, Cammy
BIO: An American self-taught martial artist who's obsessed with Ken and surprisingly fast.



NAME: Seth
FOR FANS OF: Being a jerk
BIO: He's the CEO of S.I.N. and a real bastard. That's all you need to know.

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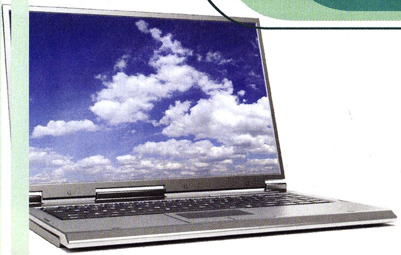

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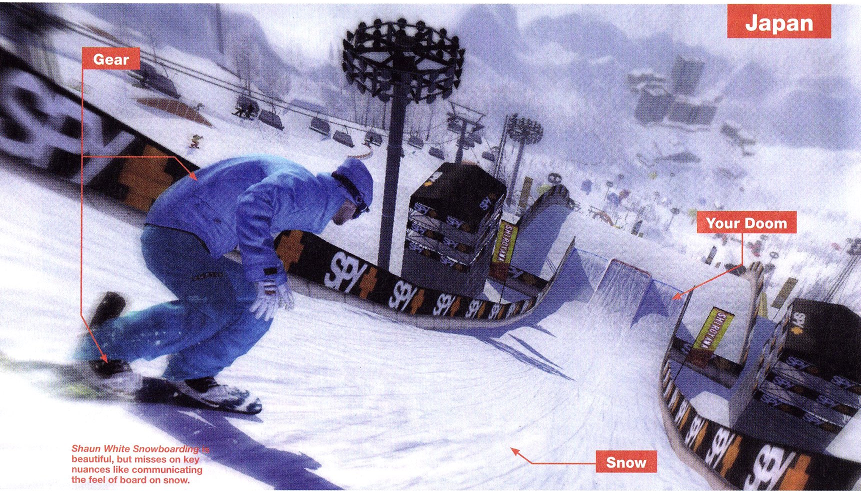


Shaun White Snowboarding is beautiful, but misses on key nuances like communicating the feel of board on snow.

Shaun White Snowboarding

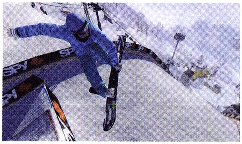
PS3 | R

Still searchin' for the sweet cherry pow pow

PS3 **PRICE:** $59.99 **ESRB:** Teen **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft **DEVELOPER:** Ubisoft Montreal

I've wanted to snowboard an avalanche ever since I saw Travis Rice's death-defying ride in the movie *First Descent*. Compared to my usual experience on the slopes—eating the snow spray of some sneering tween as I lie in a heap on a bunny hill—it's the stuff of immortals.

But while I'll never be a snowboarding god in real life, my dream scenario is finally realized in *Shaun White Snowboarding*. So it's such a shame that the fantasy-fulfillment showdown that starts out so epic, ends up as deflating as a face plant.



Experimentation and repetition is required to master tricks, but equipment upgrades are the key to performing the most extreme stunts.

The problem? After encountering a dozen avalanches during the course of playtesting, I either easily out-ran the snow slides or was quickly consumed by them. I never felt that I was riding on the edge of disaster or that survival was dependant on my heroic snowboarding skills. It's the *absence* of such defining moments that ultimately undermines the tangible snowboarding experience in *Shaun White.*

Conceptually, the sandbox (or snowbox?) nature of *Shaun White*'s gameplay should be a snowboarder's dream: Go anywhere, try anything, shred the mountain any way you want. But in execution, the result is an uneven experience that offers an abundance of freedom but is lacking in focus and structure. Except for an optional (and brief) tutorial segment, you hit the slopes with little in-game direction on what to do and how to do it. The four mountain resorts in the game—Park City, Europe, Japan, and Alaska—are all available from the get go, and you simply try and fail, then try and succeed to grasp the intricacies of the control system, the play challenges, and the slopes. On-slope it's so easy to identify the hints at gameplay brilliance—when you perform a seemingly impossible trick combo or traverse a series of obstacles on the edge of control—but they're tempered by vast stretches of the blinding white unspectacular.

The root of the problem is that all the mountains share the same collection of airborne (spins and flips) and ground-based (jibs and grinds) challenge competitions that makes it feel as if you're repeating the same tasks against slightly different backdrops. Each location hides a smattering of signature areas (like Park City's old mine town and Japan's ice palace) but the overall gameplay flavor remains blandly similar.

I initially attributed the humdrum nature of the gameplay to a design philosophy centering on realism. I'm sure it's difficult to execute these spectacular acrobatic snowboarding

Hype-athetically Speaking

"One of the best multiplayer games to hit the PS3!" Yup, we said it [Sept. 08 issue]. Sure, some of the best moments in *Shaun White* occur in multiplayer. But despite our high hopes for *Shaun White Snowboarding's* multiplayer potential, it's not quite the revolution we were hoping for. Here's a breakdown of what's straight air and what kronked:

SLIPPERY SLOPES

+ The persistent-world seamlessly blends the single-player game experience with up to 16 invited or drop-in players.

- An invited player always materializes at the base of the mountain. Appearing at the inviter's location would facilitate speedier interaction and play.

CHALLENGE HAPPY

+ Inviting players to compete in challenges via your in-game phone is simple and intuitive, and you're free to ride the slopes until the challenge begins.

- Curse the host that cuts a challenge short because they had a crappy run. Thanks for wasting my time a-hole!

SIDE SHOWS

+ Betting: Got mad skillz? Put some money on it. Get rich quick or succumb to the pressure and all your hard-earned cash ends up in someone else's pocket.

- Snowballs: Yeah, it sounds fun, but tell us what you think after someone prevents you from getting up by pelting you over and over...and over again.

TALK TO ME, DAMMIT!

- For all the talk of *Shaun White's* socialization aspects, the majority of online players don't bother to congregate and chat. The multiplayer experience is essentially competing in challenge after challenge, with minimal communication.

tricks, and I felt a tangible effort to avoid laws-of-physics-defying, arcade-style stunts. An admirable intention, although one seemingly destined to rob me of the god-like snowboarding moments I coveted. But lo and behold, I eventually discovered that I simply didn't have the special powers and expensive gear required to hit the really over-the-top stunts.

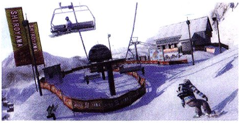
It's only deep into Shaun's Quest—which requires you to seek-and-find three coins from each mountain to acquire Focus powers—that the game gains its footing. The acquisition of these abilities and the purchase of more capable snowboards—rather than practice-derived skill—are what finally allow you to land those insane tricks you've been attempting all along, and the pedestrian gameplay experience starts to come alive. You'll still wish for more tactile feedback in the control and a more transparent arc to the skills progression, but there's a definite upswing in fun the further you play into the game.

"Uneven" perfectly describes the *Shaun White* experience: for every brilliant moment when your skills and the mountain-scape align to produce insane aerial stunts, you'll endure stretches of monotony and instances of gameplay let downs, details left unpolished, and opportunities missed. The negatives aren't grievous enough to derail the experience, but are enough to flatten it. *Shaun White* feels like a great foundation for a snowboarding game that needed another year of develop tweaks to infuse more structure, refine control tuning, and attend to the details. *Shaun White 2?* Now that game should be sick.

Roger Burchill

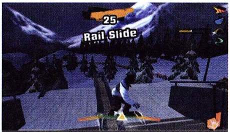
★★★½

Easiest Trophy ever: Ride a ski lift to the top without hopping off or skipping directly to gameplay.



Want entertaining banter? Snowboard with friends. Want to stand around and stare uncomfortably at each other? Hit the slopes with random strangers.

FINISH
OAKLEY



The PSP version features a more satisfying trick system structure, but rail grinds are way too easy to perform.

Shaun White Snowboarding

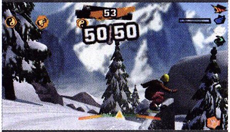
Proving bigger isn't necessarily better

PSP PRICE: $39.99 ESRB: Everyone 10+
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal

The PSP version of *Shaun White Snowboarding* isn't as ambitious in size and scope as the PS3 game, but it addresses many of its big brother's shortcomings. The first mountain (USA) serves as an in-depth tutorial that immediately acclimates you to the controls and introduces the game's objective-driven structure. A readily-accessible trick list and a more traditional single stick and buttons input system eliminate the PS3 game's control ambiguity, while the slopes in the other four locales (Alps, Canada, Japan, and Chile) are geared towards specific challenges like stunts, carving, and time trials. The densely packed courses feature numerous obstacles and terrain elements that make for satisfying combo-stringing runs. The only real complaint is the challenge-robbing grinding mechanic that doesn't even require a jump command to execute a grind. Still, you'll spend less time wandering in these mountains, and more time having high-flying fun.

Roger Burchill

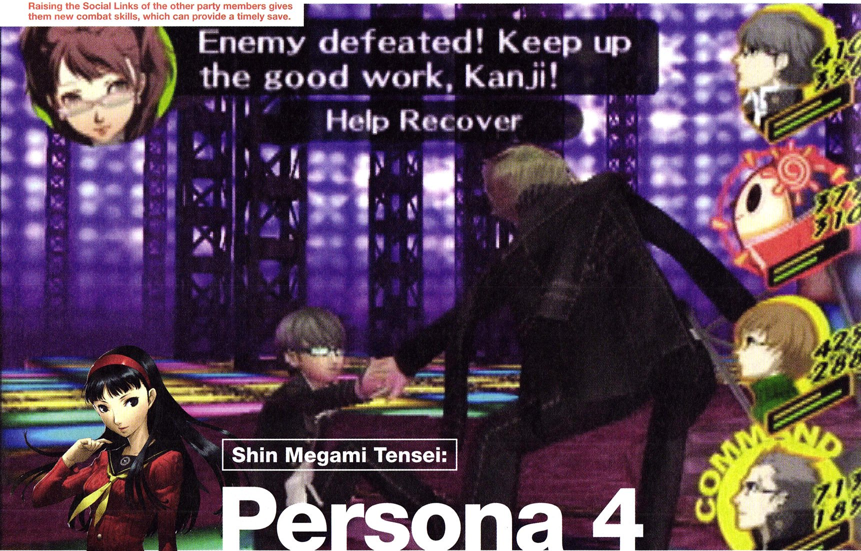
★★★★



The mountains aren't as majestic on PSP, but the thrills are more constant.

Olympic Gold medalist, perennial X-Games champion, master of two action sports: It all pales in comparison to having your own clothing line at Target.

Raising the Social Links of the other party members gives them new combat skills, which can provide a timely save.

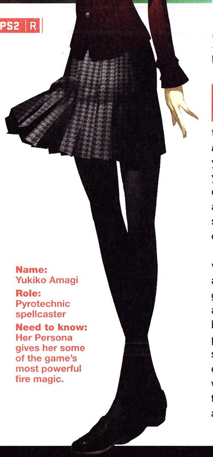


Enemy defeated! Keep up the good work, Kanji!

Help Recover

Shin Megami Tensei:

Persona 4



Name: Yukiko Amagi
Role: Pyrotechnic spellcaster
Need to know: Her Persona gives her some of the game's most powerful fire magic.

PS2 | R

Just don't shout "RANK UP!" where the neighbors can hear

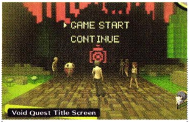
PS2 PRICE: **$39.99** ESRB: **Mature** PUBLISHER: **Atlus USA** DEVELOPER: **Atlus**

Mackin' on girls by day; rockin' dungeons full of demons by night. It's like the ultimate nerd fantasy. Okay, yes, *Persona 4* is a wee bit geeky, and your non-geek friends might laugh at your excitement at leading a virtual double life (as well as your enthusiasm for wooing virtual beauties), but seriously, ignore them. *Persona 4* is one of the year's best RPGs.

Consider this a vastly improved version of *Persona 3,* a game with a great concept—the day/night gameplay duality—that just needed an ounce or two extra weight to be truly perfect. Fortunately, *P4* provides that heft. *P4* uses the same skeletal framework, where exploring the story and interacting with different characters feeds into the mechanics of crawling through a dungeon, but now also features tuned-up combat, a stronger script, and more ways to enjoy a deceptively ordinary life.

The setting shifts from *P3*'s Tokyo-esque city to a dinky backwater town, where nothing exciting has happened in ages. But a rash of weird murders reveals a monster-haunted parallel dimension. You and your crew of high school friends have to venture into the other world and rescue the people trapped there—trapped, it turns out, by some of the uglier demons jostling about in their own minds.

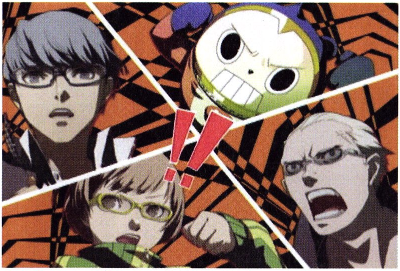
P4 has the same fast-moving turn-based combat system as the last game, but with one crucial difference. In *Persona 3,* you couldn't give direct commands to the supporting members of the party, only to the main character. The AI picked everyone else's attacks for them,



Void Quest Title Screen

Inner Space

Each of *Persona 4's* dungeons is a reflection of a different character's twisted subconscious, some of whose you have to see to believe. The damaged mind of a degenerate game geek comes to life as a parody of 8-bit RPGs, complete with a pixilated "hero" for a boss. And fame-addled pop idol Rise Kujikawa lets her, ah, exhibitionist side loose in a giant maze-like strip club, although you'll probably be too busy killing monsters to enjoy the show.



Knock down every single enemy by targeting their weaknesses and the whole party gets to beat them up at once.

and it didn't always make intelligent choices. Here, you can control the whole team, which makes it much easier to exploit an opponent's weaknesses and set up massive team attacks.

During the day, when you're living the life of a high schooler in rural Japan, the "social simulation" half of the game doesn't fall into the repetitive grind like it did in the last game. There are more activities and rewards, at any hour of the virtual day—part-time jobs to earn cash and build stats, lots of side-quests with rare items at the end, and virtual girls to put the moves on ["Hell yeah!" says Roger]

It may sound weird, but exploring the "real" world becomes as much fun as beating up monsters in the other one. The parallel dimensions win in the graphics department, though—*P4's* 3D engine may be a few steps behind the technology curve, but the design sense that gives life to the dream world and the Shadows that live there are completely out of control.

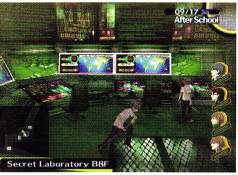
Every part of the game benefits from a great translation. This is probably Atlus USA's best work yet, with a script full of lively, natural-sounding dialogue and a cast of talented actors who take that dialogue and run with it. A lot of these voices will sound familiar from their roles in other games, but they sound a lot better, too. That's the difference good writing and good voice direction makes.

This is definitely a game with a difference all 'round—too different for some players, maybe. No matter how not-geeky you think you are, though, *Persona 4* may find a way to hook you, too.

D. F. Smith

★★★★½

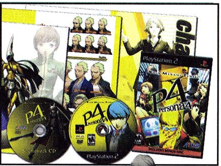
Meet Teddie, a friendly native of the game's surreal alternate world. Don't worry, he doesn't bite.

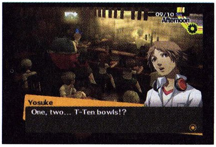


Whoever created this world has a mad scientist running around in their subconscious.

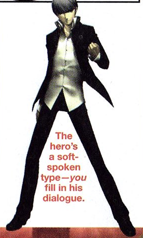
Bonus Goodies

Every copy of *Persona 4* includes a free soundtrack CD. If you preordered, you also get an artbook with sketches, costume designs, and character models. One warning: the artbook contains spoilers!

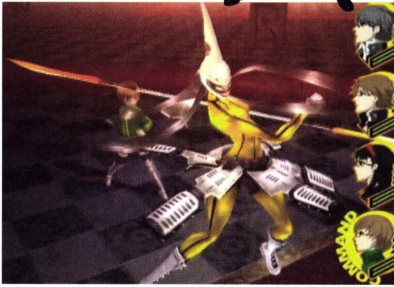




The class trip event takes *Persona* veterans back to their old stomping grounds around Gekkoukan High.



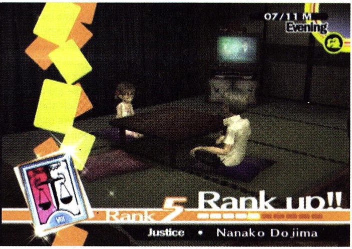
The hero's a soft-spoken type—*you* fill in his dialogue.



Chie Satonaga's a big kung-fu movie fan, so of course, her Persona is wearing the Game of Death track suit.

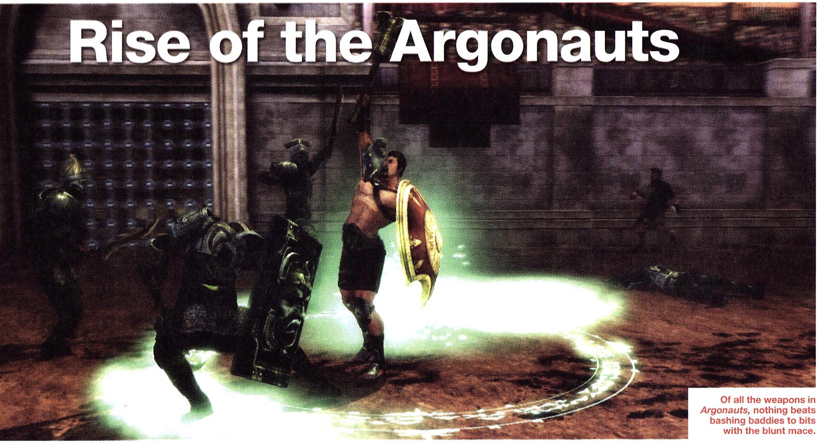
How to Kill Monsters and Influence People

Spending extra time with the characters you meet through *Persona 4's* story builds up Social Links. What's the purpose of a Social Link? Well, that's where Persona fusion comes in. You create new Personas—the spirit avatars that fight for you in combat—by fusing together the ones you already have. In the process, the new Persona can pick up some bonus experience levels and more powerful spells, depending on how much time you've put into developing a certain Social Link. Better Social Links mean stronger Personas, which means stomping the bad guys flat.



If you are a geek, watch out for anime in-jokes riffing on everything from *Death Note* to *Brother Dear Brother*.

Rise of the Argonauts



Of all the weapons in *Argonauts,* nothing beats bashing baddies to bits with the blunt mace.

A golden fleecing

PS3 **PRICE:** $59.99 **ESRB:** Mature **PUBLISHER:** Codemasters **DEVELOPER:** Liquid Entertainment

You can tell *Rise of the Argonauts* is a labor of love. Painstakingly researched (if dry and academic) mythological details nestle in every nook and cranny. The modest ambition of the bloody combat and gods-based level-up system suggests genuine commitment to putting a new spin on the same old third-person action adventure thing. Unfortunately, love ain't enough to save Jason and his hearty crew from a rampaging horde of legendary problems.

Ever the prima donna, Jason insists on shaves by Mycenae's best barber.

The troubles begin with the story, which starts off strongly—your dear wife Alceme is shot down with a poison arrow on your wedding day, and you immediately spring into brutal action, chasing down her killer—but then falls into the RPG trap of meandering side-quests and overlong chatty bits that, although interesting in snippets, add up to a whole lot of nothing. It reminds me of an eigth grade book report: packed with unnecessary details to prove you completed your assignment, but it never really goes anywhere, and it sure takes its time getting around to the point.

The combat is likewise problematic, suffering from legacy gameplay nuisances like uninterruptible animations. Start a special attack and a mob of miserable satyrs might wallop you while you whirl off in the wrong direction—or worse, you'll get smacked to pieces while you're stuck waiting for some spell to kick in. But perhaps the biggest problem with combat is that there's just not enough of it. Despite the issues I had with the glitchy battle system, I still enjoyed the brutality of Jason's mace and swiftness of his sword (he also carries a spear and a shield) enough that I craved more combat, if only to get back to the action. After all, combat is the "G" in RPG—and it sure beats the heck out of doing mindless fetch-quests for the citizenry of ancient Greece, trudging back and forth across various islands simply to increase the length of the game.

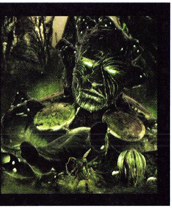
Different weapons and armor affect *how* you fight.

Argonauts does have some charm, thanks to its obsessively detailed world and occasionally gratifying combat. It's a pretty game, an ambitious game, a big game—just not a very good one. Playing it is also a labor of love... stress on "labor." Gary Steinman

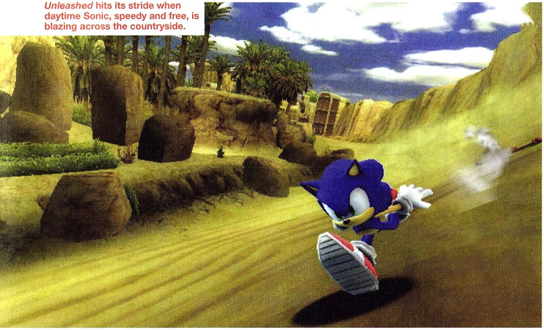
★★½

Favor of the gods

Although *Argonauts* doesn't support Trophies, it does include a Trophy-like level-up system. Everything you accomplish is a "deed," which you can dedicate to Ares, Hermes, Athena, or Apollo, building up enough "favor" to then purchase new buffs or abilities. It's a very cool interface, but it ultimately accomplishes the same exact thing as every other RPG: cash in your experience to gain new skills.



Dream girl: Alceme isn't part of the classic Jason mythology. Her character was created strictly for the game.



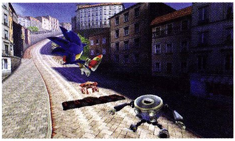
Unleashed hits its stride when daytime Sonic, speedy and free, is blazing across the countryside.

Sonic Unleashed

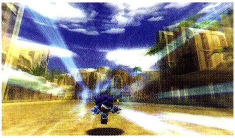
Forget the red shoes. How about a flea collar?

PS2 **PRICE:** $29.99 **ESRB:** Everyone 10+ **PUBLISHER:** SEGA **DEVELOPER:** Sonic Team

Continuing the endless battle between hedgehog and mad scientist, *Sonic Unleashed* is, er, unleashed with the blast of a Dr. Eggman ray weapon that taints the power of the Chaos Emeralds and transforms our prickly hero into a Werehog. Eggman subsequently uses the power of the tainted emeralds to unleash the mighty Dark Gaia from Earth's core, shattering our fair orb into fragments in the process. Sonic's game quest is to reform the fractured planet, crack the Eggman, and address his new found body-hair issues.



It's amazing how well the planet holds up even when it's split into pieces. Way to go, Earth!

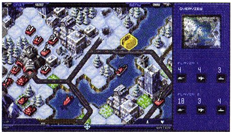


Werehog! Where hog? There. What? There, hog. Oh well, we like him shaved anyway.

Why Sonic turns into a Werehog is never intelligibly explained, but as the beast he possesses greater strength and new abilities, albeit only at night. Some traditional Sonic game qualities do remain (the stretches of high speed side-scrolling-esque action) but *Unleashed* doesn't allow Sonic to utilize his trademark speed whenever he's in Werehog form. Instead, Sonic reveals his new wild side when he dispatches enemies with powerful and upgradeable attacks using his massive claws. Stretchable Were-arms allow him to traverse the nighttime levels by climbing and swinging from poles or by "reaching" distant ledges. It is limiting, however, that the camera can't be panned around to scan for enemies in surrounding areas.

Despite Sonic's new persona, the game is an evolution of the old Genesis game formula: speed as Sonic through rollercoaster-type segments (or lumber as the Werehog through enemy-populated towns) followed by a boss fight. The problem is that while portions of *Unleashed* are entertaining, the two styles never meld into a cohesive new experience. Traditionalists will enjoy the well-executed speed-based sections while bristling at the more deliberate Werehog segments, but newcomers and those who've tired of the classic formula may welcome the notion of an old hog who's learned new tricks. Carlos Ruiz

★★★



You can unlock medals, which lets you rank up. Why that's important, we haven't a clue.

Tom Clancy's EndWar

"Get ready, men... War is serious business!"

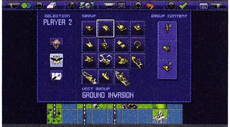
PSP **PRICE:** $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft **DEVELOPER:** Funatics Software

Imagine playing a real-time strategy game on a PSP. Small screen, no voice control, a tiny analog nub and D-pad, and a constant rush to move units into place? Talk about stressful! Maybe that's why the PSP version of *Tom Clancy's EndWar* is turn-based, unlike its real-time sibling on the PS3.

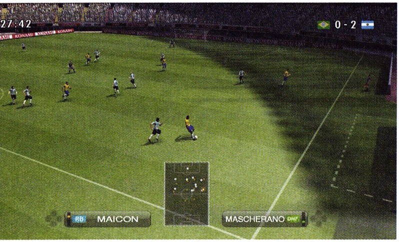
Outside the expected turn-based elements—a hexagonal grid, a need for time-consuming strategizing, and an assortment of land, sea, and air troops—two traits differentiate *EndWar* from other strategy games. First, the bad jokes, most of which target nationalistic stereotypes. Second, the clunky presentation. The order of turns is puzzling, the presentation of "action" (really, just a series of short cutscenes in between turns) is alienating, and the inability to "take back" a move, even when it's still your turn, is needlessly frustrating.

The single-player campaign is meaty with around 100 battles (they're hard, but you can call in extra troops on subsequent attempts), and you can play ad hoc with a friend. But ultimately, *EndWar* is a complex turn-based experience marred by its lack of technical polish. Teresa Dun

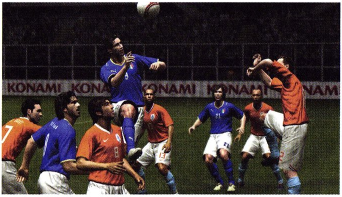
★★★



A map editor lets you create your own maps, but only with limited options.



Like Brazil vs. Argentina, PES serves up stacks of fast, end-to-end footy—that's soccer to us Yanks. No fee for the translation service.



Battling for the ball reveals a robust feel to the players, who no longer slide around the field as if towed by an invisible rope.

Pro Evolution Soccer 2009

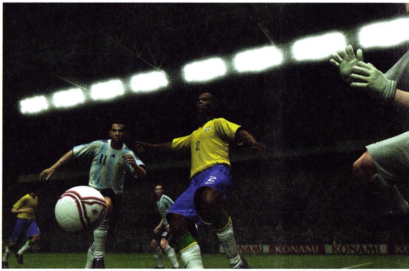
Now with added Champions League

PS3 PRICE: $49.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: Konami DEVELOPER: Konami

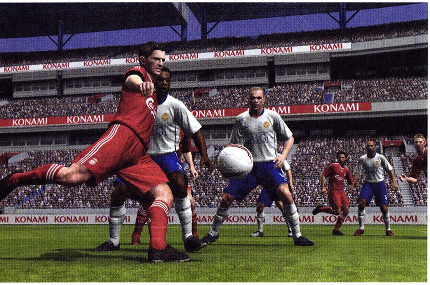
PS3 | R

Global soccerization™ is being aided largely by the fine competition for fans that occurs with each annual *PES* and *FIFA* release. One champions a set of features, the other tags on what's missing and adds its own. One dominates the licensing department stakes, the other has to make do. The result is consistent improvement, and *PES 2009* illustrates that fact in its iterative, but still significant upgrades over last year.

Until EA's dominance of licensing rights to the world's leagues, teams, and players ends (it'll never happen), *PES* will always suffer in the minds of accuracy and likeness purists. What that fails to consider is just how thrilling the on-field action can be when executed with the finesse possible through the tight, responsive controls. Gone is the ability to flummox the defenders by drawing the 'keeper out then squaring the ball for your strike partner to roll the ball home. Your players will now attack dangerous crosses into the penalty area from 30-odd yards out, rather than watch them sail into the keeper's hands. They're part of a package of tweaks that the hardcore players will really appreciate, while newcomers will revel in the core excellence of the animation and tactical awareness of the AI.



How you fare in the harsh glare of competition is up to you, but improved lighting effects mean that night games really feel like they're under floodlights.



Shooting is more delicate, but hardcore soccer fans will appreciate the tuning.

To take a leaf from *FIFA's* Be A Pro mode, *PES* lets you, ahem, Become A Legend. Rather than slip into the shoes of your favorite position player, as in *FIFA,* this mode starts you out as a 17-year-old prodigy for FC Babilayna. After working out in the reserves, against the first team, earning and boosting your stats, you're offered a contract by one of three teams. Pick one, then embark on a career to international stardom (if you can handle it). Honestly, the first time "you" score a goal is truly thrilling, and to represent your country is equally rewarding (though the camera angle of the field doesn't allow the most effective view of all the action).

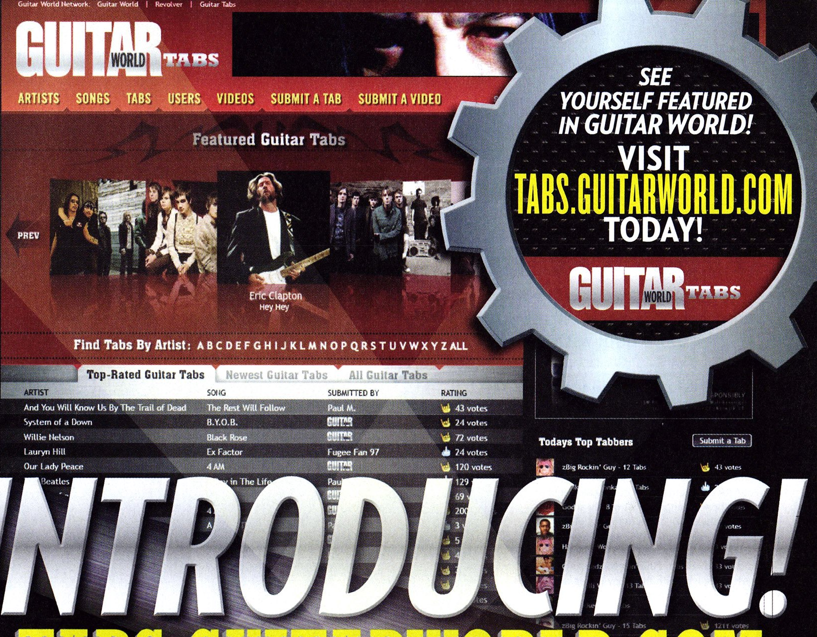
Though the Master League mode has barely been tweaked, the expansion of the editing tools is actually quite significant. If you've the time and inclination, you can turn all those fake names into real names (London FC into Chelsea, North London into Arsenal, for example), including player names, and even club badges and sponsorships. It's a big job, and you didn't hear this from us, but a perusal of the Internet may save you the time!

So for soccer purists, if you're able to remove the barrier to acceptance built by the licensing (though *PES* includes full Champions League support, including the images and music), this is a wonderfully deep, playable, and entertaining sim.

Rob Smith

★★★★½

The UEFA Champions League is an annual Europe-wide club football competition organized by UEFA since 1992.



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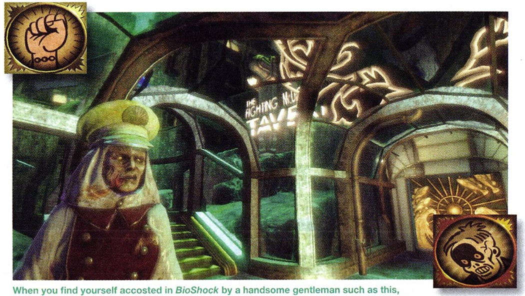
» THE EASY ROAD TO GLORY

TROPHY LIFE

Get ahead without working hard. It's the American dream, in a trophy philosophy, wrapped in a PTOM advice column! Earn a respectable haul with the least possible effort. You're welcome.

Killzone 2, Street Fighter IV, Alpha Protocol—when you think of PlayStation 3 in 2009, these smoking-hot titles are what spring to mind. But with Sony's new directive to include Trophies in each and every PS3 title from January 2009 forward, Trophy junkies will be helplessly slaving away at AAA and bargain-bin games alike just to earn those intangible, yet wholly addictive unlockables. Welcome to the delightful world of Trophy slumming. We've got the lowdown on some of the easiest (and most interesting) unlocks from 2008 so you can stock your virtual shelves with the shiny prizes and get the jump on your friends.



When you find yourself accosted in *BioShock* by a handsome gentleman such as this, please remember to snap a photo of him before bludgeoning him with your pipe wrench.

LittleBigPlanet

There are plenty of Trophies to be soaked up after you've completed the tutorial. Raking in all of 'em requires soldiering through the solo missions, but you can earn a hefty number with minimal effort if you get creative.

Trendsetter Few things are more amusing than slapping a sticker on a buddy's ugly mug during the middle of building a level. Tag a friend's forehead with a sticker (preferably something embarrassing) to pull in another Trophy. Just make sure you can outrun your friend's furious and humiliated graffiti-tainted Sackperson.

Homemaker Pimping your pad is a natural first instinct, but elaborating beyond the mushroom on your window and a train on the floor is a must if you're hunting the Bronze. Unleash your inner interior decorator and unlock the Homemaker award by buffing out your pod with 10 or more sticker decals.

Fashion Sense If you need a fast and nasty Trophy fix, slap a facial accessory on your shirt-wearing Sackboy, and change its material from burlap to something like denim. The nice new threads will definitely impress the Sackladies as well.

10 Trophies. Five Minutes. One Level If you want to check 10 *LBP* Trophies off of your list, search for "Trophies Paradise 1.1" under Cool Levels. User Davrock1's excellent compilation stage is specifically built for slumming. Within the first few seconds, you'll collect enough bubbles to earn the 2X, 8X and 20X Multiplier Trophies, as well as the one million point Hi Score Silver award. Immediately afterward, take a quick car ride to net Incredible Speed, and jump on the Sackboy-launching rocket ship to nab Incredible Height and Sackbird to wrap up. After you earn the Traveller Trophy for completing a community level, tag it, and leave a comment for two more. Whew! Nice haul.

BioShock

If you're slow and methodical about exploring the underwater metropolis of Rapture, *BioShock* should take you 12 hours to complete. Taking the extra time to explore, invent, and upgrade will earn you a serious stack of Trophies. If you're really determined, you'll be able to earn at least 90-percent of them in a single run. Just try not to forget about these easier awards during your adventure.

Found Cohen's Room You see Sander Cohen's room long before you get the opportunity to step in. If you listen to what the rabbit mask-wearing lunatic has to say, you'll gain access to his personal quarters where you'll find a spiffy new Trophy. Feel free to finish him off once you loot his room.

Irony There's a self-proclaimed artist halfway through *BioShock* who sends you on a fetch-quest to snap photos. The twist? You have to murder assigned targets and snap photos of their bodies. Creepy. When the opportunity arises, feed the sicko a few flaming shotgun rounds and give him a taste of his own medicine: a Kodak of his corpse. Ping! Another Bronze.

Little Sister Savior You've got to be deranged in a big, bad way to want to suck the life out of the infantile inhabitants of

Of all the games that retroactively received Trophies, *Uncharted* could well be our favorite. Why? Well, partly because it's an excellent game, but mostly because many of those Trophies are an easy get! Just be sure to keep those fists flying and you'll be on your way to some shiny loot in no time!

Rapture. But the reward for harvesting their power, rather than rescuing them, is an enticing tipping of the scales. If you resist the temptation of short-term power upgrades, you'll receive a Trophy. You'll also have the added benefit of proving that your head is screwed on tight.

Shutterbug While it's one of *BioShock's* weaker aspects, you can't help but love the upgrades you get for avoiding action in favor of taking pictures of your bloodthirsty foes. Few activities are more terrifying than trying to get a perfect shot of a Big Daddy, but taking snapshots of each of the various enemies around the world teaches you more about them. Educated underwater adventurers earn loads of Trophies, so ensure that you research everyone to the fullest potential. The 15 Trophy-payoff is worth the repeated dying. Just try not to forget you've got the camera in the middle of a violent duel.

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Drake's treasure hunting themes couldn't be more appropriate for deprived addicts looking to level up their Trophy card.

Relic Finder The elusive Strange Relic isn't as tough to find as you might think. Just think like an explorer during "The Fortress," *Uncharted's* fifth chapter. When you ascend the stairs at the fortress entrance, walk back toward the trigger-happy enemy instead of toward the courtyard. You'll find your Bronze Trophy hidden in a bush on the building left of the bridge.

One down, 49 to go. Time to reload the level for a cheap and easy road to a Trophy!

Hangman Hanging from a ledge and capping asses is no easy task. But our main man, Nathan Drake, is a capable chap who can easily pull it off early on in the game. After your plane crashes, hop up on the first ledge in front of your suspended parachute. Once you've got Drake lined up, point your bullets in the direction of 10 of the not-so-friendly mercenaries. Don't try and lift that Trophy, though. Your arms will be tired from hanging.

Brutal Expert Brutal Combos take a bit of time to master, but the rhythmic Square, Triangle, Square flow unleashes a flurry of fist-based hurt on your foe's face. Taking out five guys in a row sounds tricky, but you can rig the game's difficulty setting if you don't have faith in your abilities. Otherwise, punch the Silver Trophy out of the invading pirates in the first stage. The scoundrels come one at a time and are practically begging for your ferocious fisticuffs.

Going Overboard If you want to kill three birds with one stone, play the first level on Easy and save like a sissy! Taking out five pirate invaders with a shoot-punch combo will unlock Steel Fist—consecutively, they make you a Steel Fist Expert. If you can waste 50 of them without dying, you'll earn the Silver Survivor Trophy. The trick to surviving is to dispose of the dozen attacking enemies, then reload the level. Since kills are cumulative, you can save and replay without losing the kill-count!

You won't know what's going on, but you'll unlock a whole lot of Trophies in 15 minutes!

THE POWER OF PSN

If you've got cash in your online wallet (or a credit card that's burning a hole in your real one) these delicious downloadables shouldn't take more than a weekend to satisfy your urge to earn.

Linger in Shadows

While it's more "art" than "game," *Linger* is a PSN download that is full of easy-to-unlock Trophies. After dropping the three bucks to buy it, it'll take you all of 15 minutes to earn the entire batch of Silver and Bronze goodies. Take it easy during the Watch mode and keep your eyes open for the flashing camera indicator that tells you to explore with your Sixaxis.

PixelJunk Monsters

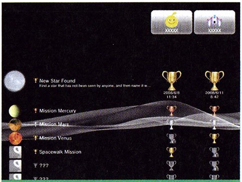
After a bit of trial-and-error, you'll be able to clean house in *PixelJunk Monsters* without breaking a sweat. Though the objectives are all focused on solo play, you'll have no problems perfectly protecting the adorable Tiki babies. Later Trophy stages get tricky, but more than half of them can be yours in exchange for a couple hours of your time.

Penny Arcade Adventures Episode One

What isn't to like about the first episode of *PA Adventures?* Killing every enemy in the game, grinding your characters to the level cap, using every item, collecting goodies, and murdering a hobo with a crotch-licking kitty—it has everything! It's also short, so you can earn 100-percent of the Trophies in a single sitting.

FLEE
LEVEL 4
LEVEL 3
LEVEL 4

This romp is short and hilarious, making it a worthy time investment for Trophy whores.



New Star Found
Find a star that has not been seen by anyone, and then name it w...
2008/6/8 11:34
2008/6/11 8:42
Mission Mercury
Mission Mars
Mission Venus
Spacewalk Mission
???
???

See all these Trophies? Well none of 'em came from these games, that's for sure.

TROPHY TRAPS!

Just because a game has Trophies doesn't mean you should play it. These big-name games might be awesome, but junkies won't find a worthwhile fix here. Approach with extreme caution!

Far Cry 2

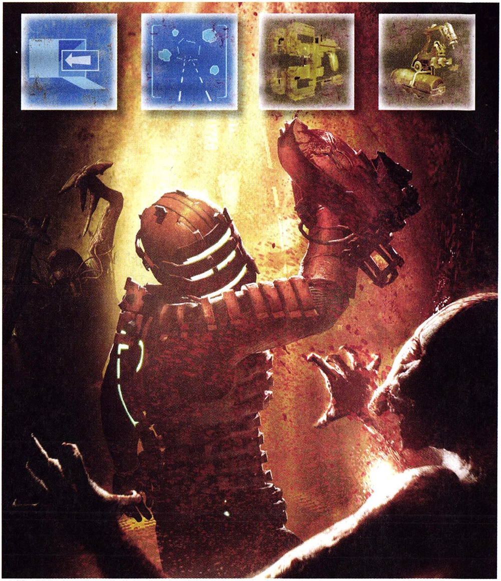
You'd probably be better off hunting a lion with steaks strapped to your stomach than seeking out the spread-out Trophy offerings of *Far Cry 2*. The arduous grind of ascending the multiplayer ranks and exploring every inch of the campaign will leave you thirsty for a reward you likely won't earn.

Burnout Paradise

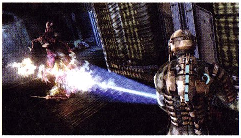
You can play *Paradise* for weeks at a time without earning so much as a Bronze since you're only awarded Trophies for completing difficult or time-consuming tasks. Stick to this city for the speed and smashing, not because you want rad prizes.

WipEout HD

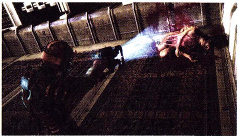
At 20 bones, *WipEout* is a mighty fine investment if you're looking for fun. But the goals you'll have to achieve are ridiculous. Conquering insanely tough challenges and track times prove frustrating for the junkie, and super speedy space-cars do not necessarily earn Trophies quickly.



Oh sure, this may look tough, but picking up Trophies in *Dead Space* is actually a breeze. Really! Just be sure to follow the instructions we've outlined for you to acquire some unique and interesting Trophies.



Killing 30 enemies with this handy little flamethrower will earn you a Bronze Trophy. The same is true of the six other weapons as well.



You'll be awarded with a Gold Trophy if you manage to make it through *Dead Space* using only the Plasma Pistol. But it's not worth the effort.

Dead Space

If you like fetch-questing, repairing, and slaughtering on top of your Trophy earning, look no further than the interstellar reaches of *Dead Space.*

Don't get cocky, kid! Sitting behind the turret of the ADS cannon is, as the title suggests, very reminiscent of Han and Luke's space-shootout in *Star Wars.* While the *Ishimura* isn't quite the *Millennium Falcon,* and incoming asteroids don't equate to a squadron of TIE fighters, it's hard not to belt out a "Wahoo!" when you make your mark. Ensure that your cannon shots are landing where the incoming meteors are about to be, not where they are. A *Space Invaders* mentality will keep your ship's shields at maximum level, and by blasting asteroids well ahead of time you won't have to worry about the damage level dropping below the Trophy's 50-percent threshold.

Pack Rat Who, in their right mind, is willing to sacrifice 25 of their precious few items in a spaceship storage box? Well, you, if you want to buff out your Trophy collection. Fill your storage with every weapon, ammo clip, and extra item you're carrying, and purchase the goods you're missing. Once you've achieved your goal, loot your bin and get on your way! Sure, main character Isaac could have spent that time looking for his lost lady, but you need to impress with a top-tier Trophy card.

There's Always Peng! Keen observers will see the Physical Trophy in the game's first chapter. The Peng-branded treasure is worth 30,000 bucks when you sell it, but the primary reason for finding this Easter egg is the Bronze reward. When you come back to the intro area in Chapter 11, you'll find the coveted prize at the left of the walkway at the ship's entrance. Now that you possess your Gordon Freeman-style Kinesis power, you can grab the little sucker from a distance. Cha-ching!

Cut it out The glimmer of a Gold Trophy is all too tempting if you're aching for a new accolade, but you must resist! The One Gun award requires you to use only your plasma pistol for the entirety of the game, but if you kick that idea to the curb you can earn six other Bronze awards. How? By using the other weapons. Shooting for more Trophies is better than one, and the controller-crushingly frustrating mini-bosses will make you want to kick your console. They eat your plasma cutter shots like scrumptious marshmallows.

Alone in the Dark: Inferno

This horror game is incredibly generous with the rewards, and you can earn most of them by simply playing *Inferno* to the end. But if you want to ensure you get 'em all, don't forget these cleverly crafted mini-missions.

The Blind Man *Inferno's* intro instructs you to click your analog stick to blink away the muddy murk that obscures your vision. But if you refuse to clear away the cloudy view and wearily walk your way to the end of the blurry opening sequence, you'll net yourself a Bronze Trophy. Sight is for suckers, anyway.

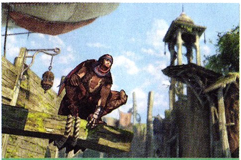
Fisherman's Foe Every assassin needs a brief on their target, and yours is a sewer-swimming goldfish. You'll find your mark in the shallow waters of a circular pit at the very beginning of "Filthy Waters." As the scene starts, turn around and make your way down the rear hallway to find your unsuspecting target in a circular pit of shallow water. Put a bullet in his adorable orange belly, and you'll be paid in Bronze.

Cockpit Addict The only thing cooler than recklessly driving a vehicle through a crumbling city street is earning a Silver Trophy for doing it from a first-person perspective. When you make your way out to 59th Street, immediately pop into Edward Carnby's eyeballs and put the pedal to the metal. The chaotic course features plenty of awesome explosions and sweet jumps, which makes the high-speed experience all the more rewarding.

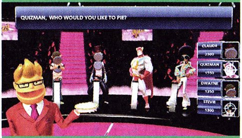
Grand Theft Trophies Want to earn a trio of Trophies in 10 minutes? Here's the scoop: Once you make it to Central Park, you'll need some wheels. Hop in the driver's seat of any vehicle and nab the keys hidden above the sun visor for a *Terminator*-inspired Trophy. After that, take a 10 mile spin around the park to unlock another Bronze. When you finish your zombie-crushing car cruise, get out and stick your screwdriver into the gas tank and siphon the fuel into a bottle for, you guessed it, another Bronze.

O hai. Have you guys seen my Trophies? OMG!

We sure hope you're enjoying our little Trophy Guide. As a bonus, here are some helpful tips on how to deal with shirtless zombies: Shoot them! Oh God, they're coming for us! Run, run! Every man for himself!!!



Just like *Uncharted, Prince of Persia* is worth a play for both its quality and Trophies.



Question: What's better than a pie in the face? Answer: Easy Trophies!

QUICKIES

The approach of "play this game, get a fat stacks of Trophies" is a rare commodity in PS3 games, but if you want to earn Trophies without going out of your way to do anything but play, give these three babies a shot.

Buzz! Quiz TV

Slap on your thinking cap and curl up on the couch for quick quiz-show Trophies. Playing dozens of fast-paced online and offline multiplayer matches pulls in tons of easy Trophies as you inch your way to Platinum, but don't forget to play other players' home-brewed quiz questions along the way.

Mercenaries 2: World in Flames

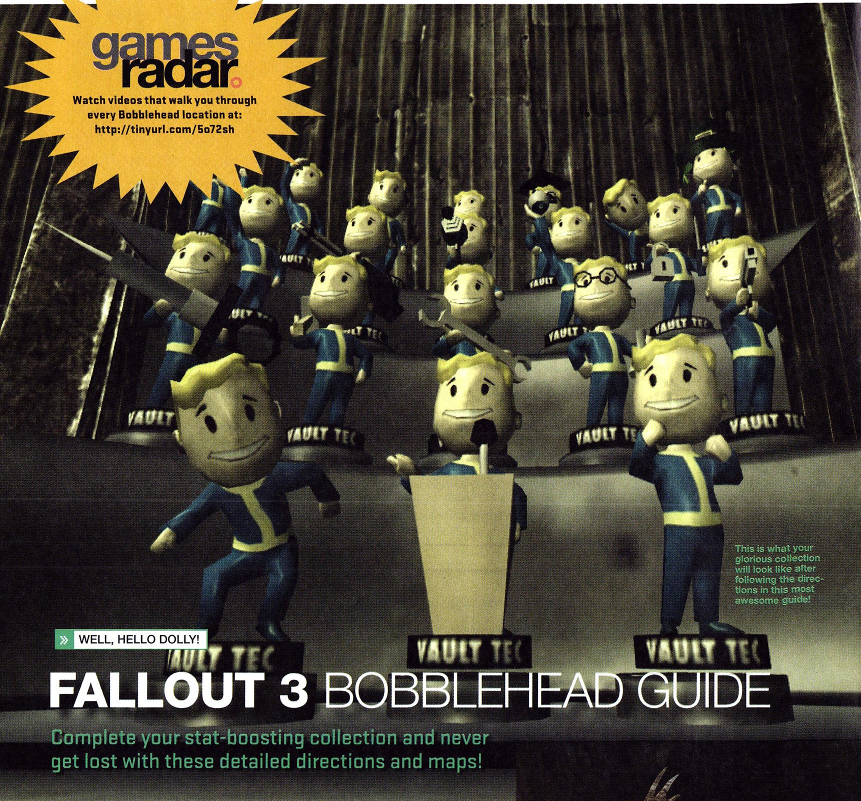
Trophies unlock as often as you reload your rifle in *Mercenaries 2.* The requirements are simple: drive, race, hunt and generally make a mess of Venezuela with RPGs, grenades and airstrikes. And don't forget to hit the co-op campaign—you and a bud are able to unlock 80-percent or more of the Trophies in less than six hours!

Prince of Persia

The thousand collectible Seeds will keep you down, but the Prince's clean-up adventure is rife with easy Trophy earnings. If you make a point of completing areas quickly, kicking ass in combat, and chilling out to chit-chat with your lady friend, your Trophy bar will fill faster than you can plummet down a chasm.

gamesradar

Watch videos that walk you through every Bobblehead location at: http://tinyurl.com/5o72sh



This is what your glorious collection will look like after following the directions in this most awesome guide!

» WELL, HELLO DOLLY!

FALLOUT 3 BOBBLEHEAD GUIDE

Complete your stat-boosting collection and never get lost with these detailed directions and maps!

Bobblehead hunters will have pilfered these sought-after trophies from dusty shelves and desks across the Wasteland. But to be the ultimate survivor of the broken-down D.C. you'll need to collect *all* of these wobbly figurines. Seven Bobbleheads boost your core S.P.E.C.I.A.L. stats and 13 provide a healthy bonus to your skills, and we're here to help you find every last one.

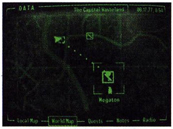
NOTE: Although we've done our best to avoid any major spoilers, explaining how to find each one might reveal a few details that you may not want to see. So read on with care, fellow Wastelanders.

FALLOUT 3 BOBBLEHEAD GUIDE

STRENGTH BOBBLEHEAD
Megaton

You'll find the Strength Bobblehead in Lucas Simm's home in Megaton. It's the very first shack on your immediate right when you enter the city. It'll be locked, so you'll either have to pick the lock, steal the key from Lucas, kill Lucas and take the key, or get Mr. Burke to kill Lucas by reporting him. Climb up the stairs and enter Lucas Simm's bedroom on your left. Check the top of his desk.

WARNING: If you're planning to take the evil route by blowing up the city of Megaton, make sure you grab the Strength Bobblehead first!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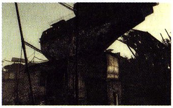
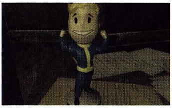
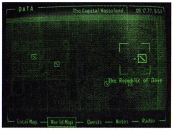

Once you enter Megaton, you'll see Lucas Simm's house to your right.


You'll find the Bobblehead on Lucas Simm's desk.

PERCEPTION BOBBLEHEAD
The Republic of Dave

The Republic of Dave is in the far northeast corner of the world map. Enter the camp and head into the Museum of Dave, which should be the first building on your left. Once inside, you'll find the Bobblehead on the shelf to your right.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The Republic of Dave
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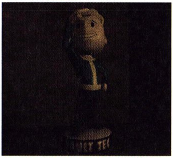
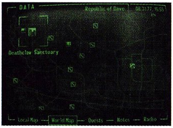


You'll find this Perception Bobblehead on a shelf in the Museum of Dave.

ENDURANCE BOBBLEHEAD
Deathclaw Sanctuary

Head northwest from Paradise Falls to reach Deathclaw Sanctuary. Just follow the sloping path on the right until you see a well-lit area on your left. You'll find the Endurance Bobblehead near the brahmin corpse.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Deathclaw Sanctuary
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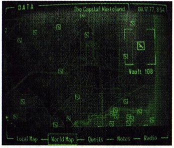
As you may have guessed, there are lots of nasty Deathclaws waiting inside of Deathclaw Sanctuary.

Keep up the good work. Your character is getting stronger with each Bobblehead you find!

CHARISMA BOBBLEHEAD
Vault 108

You'll find Vault 108 on the eastern edge of the world map. Head south from the Republic of Dave to reach it. Once you enter the Vault, head straight until you see the big blood stain on the wall at the top of the first set of steps, and then head left and walk as straight as you can past the power generators to the door labeled 108. Head down both flights of stairs (ignoring the first room on your right) into the lab area, and you'll find the Charisma Bobblehead on a desk in the second room on the right.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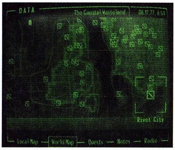
Nothing says pizzazz like a winning smile.

INTELLIGENCE BOBBLEHEAD
Rivet City

Rivet City sits on the very southeast corner of the map, west of the Jefferson Memorial. After heading across the bridge and past the guard, take the first door on the left into the city itself. Once inside, take a hard left and enter the nearby door (taking note of the sign next to it pointing to the "science lab"). Head straight until the hallway ends at a red light and the next "science lab" sign. Take its advice and head right until you reach the next sign, which will point you to the left. Keep straight until you reach a door (ignoring the hallway that you'll pass on your right). Open the door and take the stairs to your right. Hang a U-turn at the bottom and head towards the row of laboratory tables, illuminated by some distinctive yellow lights. The Intelligence Bobblehead will be on the far right side of these tables.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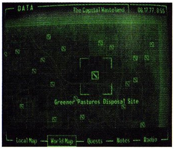
AGILITY BOBBLEHEAD
Greener Pastures Disposal Site

Head southwest from the Republic of Dave to reach the Greener Pastures Disposal Site. You'll be exposed to lots of radiation while roaming through this area, so be sure pop some Rad-X pills beforehand. After you've "discovered" this location, use the map to fast travel to it. The game will spawn you on a pile of rocks. Jump off the rocks and bank left for a short distance until you see a concrete bunker. Once inside, look for the Bobblehead on a desk directly across from the front door.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Greener Pastures Disposal Site
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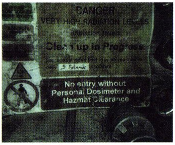
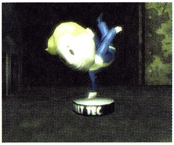
FALLOUT 3 BOBBLEHEAD GUIDE

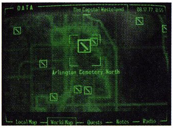

DANGER
VERY HIGH RADIATION LEVELS
Clean up in Progress
No entry without Personal Dosimeter and Hazmat Clearance

Greener Pastures has very high radiation levels, so protect yourself accordingly.



LUCK BOBBLEHEAD
Arlington House

The Arlington House is in the middle of the Arlington Cemetery. But to get there, you'll need to navigate the underground tunnel system. First, head into Marigold Station. Once you reach the first large room, jump down to the first floor on your left and take the left tunnel. Follow the Blue Line tracks and head through the door on your left when you reach the giant grates to exit at Falls Church. Head east until you reach the Falls Church/Arlington Metro Station. Once you reach the first large room, cut straight across the rubble and pass the Nuka-Cola machine. Head east to discover Mama Dolce's. Then head north to enter the cemetery. The Arlington House lies between North Arlington and South Arlington. Head to the basement to find the Luck Bobblehead.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Arlington Cemetery North
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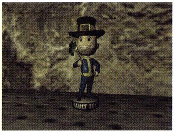
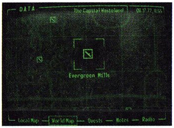


BARTER BOBBLEHEAD
Evergreen Mills

Evergreen Mills is west of Megaton, just to the east of Smith Casey's Garage. Once inside, find the door into the Bazaar (one of the first doors you'll reach), and then make your way up the winding path of wooden planks. When you reach the pool table, head to your right. Stay to your right, and keep an eye out for the small passage in the back of room. Check the shelf behind the counter for the Barter Bobblehead.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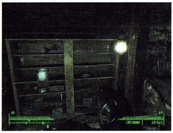
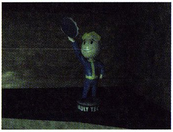
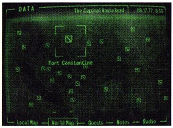




BIG GUNS BOBBLEHEAD
Fort Constantine

Fort Constantine is in the northwestern section of the world map. It's also directly north of the WKML Broadcast Station. Fast travel there, and then turn around and enter the house to the southwest. Head to the basement, and you'll find the Big Guns Bobblehead in the open safe. You can pick up a pile of spare caps once you find the Big Guns Bobblehead.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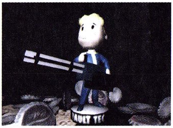
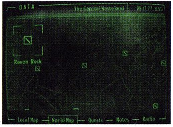


ENERGY WEAPONS BOBBLEHEAD
Raven Rock

Raven Rock is in the very northwest corner of the world map. But you'll need to wait until you've completed enough of the main story quests to enter the facility. Go left after you leave Cell 4, and make your way up the stairs to area 3B. Pass the mess hall and head up the stairs to area 2A. Turn left once you enter the lab and continue on to area 2B. When you see the door to area 2C, head into the room across the hall from it, and check the desk for the Energy Weapons Bobblehead.

WARNING: If you continue through the door to area 2C, you'll miss the chance to collect this Bobblehead FOREVER so it might be a good idea to save early just in case.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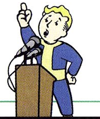

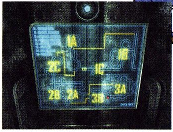
1A
1B
2C
1C
2B
2A
3B
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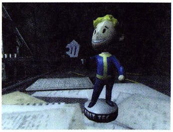
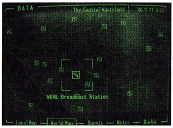


EXPLOSIVES BOBBLEHEAD
WKML Broadcast Station

WKML Broadcast Station is directly south of Fort Constantine and west of Paradise Falls. The Sealed Cistern entrance is nestled near the bottom of some large boulders under a large radio antenna just south of the radio station. It's easy to miss this entrance even if you know where to look, so use your local map to reveal its location.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WKML Broadcast Station
Local Map
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Quests
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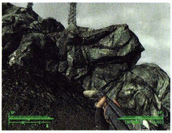
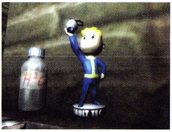
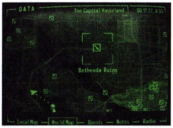
Radio





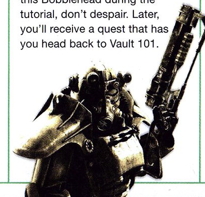
LOCKPICK BOBBLEHEAD
Bethesda Ruins

You'll find the Bethesda Ruins to the northeast of Megaton, across the river. The ruins actually consist of two separate buildings, so make sure you enter the one farther to the east. (If you're stuck in the western ruins, you can find a bridge on the upper floor that'll lead to the eastern side.) Once inside, find the hole in the wall that leads up to the second level. Once there, turn left and pass through the next gaping hole. Head straight for a few steps until you see an open doorway off to the right. Pass through the doorway, turn right, and then make another right through the next doorway. The Bobblehead will be on a desk next to a lantern in the back left corner of the room.



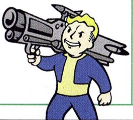
MEDICINE BOBBLEHEAD
Vault 101

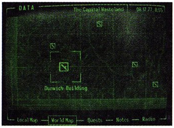
For most players, this will be the first Bobblehead collected. Before you take the G.O.A.T. exam, head to your father's desk and grab the Medicine Bobblehead. Easy. If you missed this Bobblehead during the tutorial, don't despair. Later, you'll receive a quest that has you head back to Vault 101.



MELEE WEAPONS BOBBLEHEAD
Dunwich Building

You'll find Dunwich Building in the very southwestern corner of the world map. This is one of those areas where you'll need to climb up and jump down to different levels to actually get to the Bobblehead. After entering the building, take your first right and head up the stairs. Head left at the first intersection and go right into the room with all the holes in the floor. Drop down. Head through the door in the northwest corner and continue to reach the door to the Forsaken Dunwich Ruins. Head up the stairs and keep going straight. Hang a left in the dark room at the end of the hall and continue up the stairs. Take your first left and stay to your left as you proceed down the hall. Make sure you turn left at the fire extinguisher and pass the room with the holes in the ground. Continue sticking to your left and drop down to the lower level. Head through the door to the south and proceed to reach the Virulent Chambers. Drop down several levels and head through the door to the south. The next path will lead you down and up several flights of stairs. You'll eventually find a Bobblehead on the ground right before the exit.

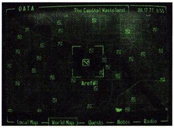


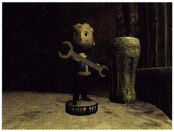


No MC Hammer jokes here.

REPAIR BOBBLEHEAD
Arefu

Arefu is northwest of Vault 101 and directly south of Paradise Falls. You'll find the Bobblehead in Evan King's house in the very back of the settlement (it's probably the largest building in the city, so you can't miss it). Make an immediate left when you enter the house and grab the bobblehead off the table.

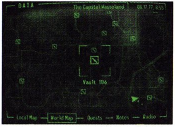


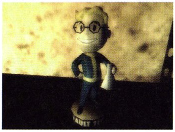


Don't underestimate the Repair skill. It'll help you maintain and improve the quality of all your gear.

SCIENCE BOBBLEHEAD
Vault 106

Vault 106 is northwest of Vault 101 and south of Paradise falls. Enter the vault and head straight until you see the first big open door on your right. Head through the door and continue straight until you hit a wall, then take the staircase on your right. Turn left at the bottom of the stairs, and continue straight until you reach the bottom of the next flight of stairs where you'll again turn left. Follow the hallway down a third staircase that will lead you to a door. After the game loads, make a left across the little bridge and then a quick right-left combo into the furthest door. Follow the path and you should see the Science Bobblehead waiting for you on a shelf in the back of the big classroom.





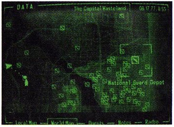
SMALL GUNS BOBBLEHEAD
National Guard Depot

Are you ready to fight some robots? Good! There's a ton of them guarding the National Guard Depot (find it on the map), so stock up on Stimpacks and make sure you're well equipped for a major shootout. Once you enter the depot, head left up the stairs, jump towards the big pipe, and move through the door on your right. Stay to your right and work your way past the room with the filing cabinets. Circle around the building and drop down to the floor below. Pass the two Nuka-Cola machines to reach the Depot Training Wing.

Head straight to the edge of the room and proceed through the door on your left. At the first intersection, head left. Pass the American flag and take a right at the end of the hallway. When you reach the locker room, head through the door to your right. Pass the sandbags and go through the door to your right to reach the Depot Offices.

FALLOUT 3 BOBBLEHEAD GUIDE

Proceed straight through the door ahead and take the stairs to your right. Head up the next flight of stairs straight ahead of you and go through the door to your left. Pass the reception area, head up the stairs, and take a right. Climb up the rubble to reach the floor above you and head through the door to the National Guard Depot. You have now gone through many ridiculous circles to reach an electric switch that was two floors above you when you first entered the National Guard Depot. Pull the damned switch and jump down to enter the blast door. Continue down into the armory, where you'll find the Small Guns Bobblehead as well as a HUGE cache of weapons.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National Guard Depot
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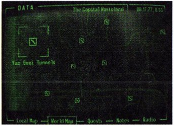
You can help yourself to a ton of free weapons and ammunition while visiting the National Guard Depot.

You'll need to work your way up to the top floor to pull this switch before you can proceed through the locked door near the entrance.

SNEAK BOBBLEHEAD
Yao Guai Tunnels

Yao Guai Tunnels is on the western edge of the map and is just northwest of Smith Casey's Garage. Look for a collection of boulders that split to reveal a small chain link fence (which happens to be the door). Now just stick to the path: take a right under the wooden archways at the first fork, go left by the glowing lantern on the floor at the next fork, hug the right-hand wall until you walk past the wooden ramp on your right, and make your way to the opposite side of the big cavern where you'll find a door. After the load, follow the oath—sticking to the right wherever possible—until you reach the next big room. Head straight until you're about to hit a wall and then veer to the left. You'll pass some shelves and find the Bobblehead on a box directly in front of you.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Yao Guai Tunnels
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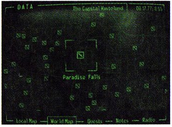
It's REALLY easy to miss this Bobblehead in the dark tunnels, so make good use of your Pipboy flashlight.

SPEECH BOBBLEHEAD
Paradise Falls

Head north from Arefu to reach Paradise Falls. You'll find the Bobblehead on a desk in Eulogy's Pad (which has a big sign out front that reads… "Eulogy's Pad").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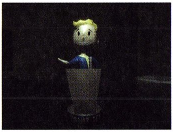
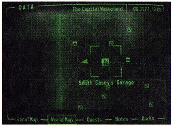


UNARMED BOBBLEHEAD
Rockopolis

Rockopolis is just west of Smith Casey's Garage, but it doesn't show up on the world map. Keep your eyes peeled for a boulder with a string of flags hanging over it and check your local map periodically as you head west. Once you get there, simply head to back of the cave and search the ground until you find it.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Smith Casey's Garage
Local Map
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The entrance to Rockopolis is easy to miss. Stay vigilant!

GamesRadar.com Top 7...

Bad guys you didn't want to kill

The gaming murders that left a bad taste in our mouths

The Colossi

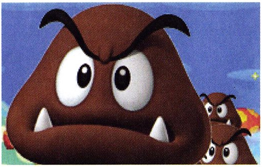
Shadow of the Colossus

Most of these huge beasts are just minding their own business and only attack once provoked. Colossus 13 doesn't even retaliate, instead merely attempting to shake you off. They clearly feel pain too - stab them in the head and you'll know about it. Come on, one of them's even got a cool beard, yet you still killed it, didn't you? It's dead now. You did it. Shame on you.

Wanna read more?

- Stereotypical gamers we hate
- Gaming nudity you didn't notice
- Secret shame games

Head to:
gamesradar.com/top7



Goombas

Super Mario Bros.

If you stand still and they hit you, you die, but then that's true of buses and you don't go around stamping on them. You only get 100 points per kill too - the gaming equivalent of a $5.00 whole chicken. Has life really become so discounted?

GLaDOS

Portal

Just as hostages can come to bond with their captors, so you end up liking GLaDOS - the female-voiced computer in Portal, the Best Game Ever Made (TM). Guilt for killing her is prolonged because you have to do it a piece at a time. While she talks to you. (Sniff.)

Orbinaut

Sonic the Hedgehog

After these critters toss their spikes they're just cute, marshmallowy-looking creatures that just stare and slowly move forwards. They're now totally harmless. Are you really such a bastard that you'd kill them? Yep, us too. But we felt dirty afterwards.

Big Daddies

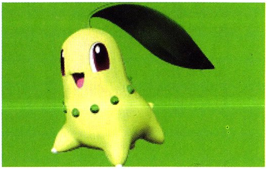
BioShock

They're huge, ugly, armed with a massive drill and turn violent with only the smallest provocation, but the Big Daddies still make us sad when they die. They're only protecting their Little Sister after all. 'Wake up, Mr Bubbles?' Sorry, ain't gonna happen.

Spotty Bulorb

Pikmin

This is the angry mob lynching of gaming, The Spotty Bulorb is surrounded in its sleep, worn down and then killed. While its children watch! Or maybe you killed them first? OK, so it's just like nature. But nature can be so cruel.



Level 1

Pokemon

You've been playing for ages and you run into a low-level Pokemon. That's when you realise your super-powered team of fighters has become a remorseless unit. What chance does a level 2 Pidgey have against your level 67 Glaceon?

gamesradar.com
The official website of the internet

» CLASS IS IN SESSION

CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR CUSTOM CLASSES

How you build your custom class in *Call of Duty: World at War* can reveal a lot about your personality: whether you're cautious, aggressive, reckless, or patient. So what type of people are the folks responsible for the game? We quizzed them about their favorite custom classes to see if we could find out...

Adam Saslow Associate Producer at Treyarch

NAME OF LOADOUT: TOTALLY_UNFAIR
PRIMARY WEAPON: PPSH -41 W/ ROUND DRUM
SECONDARY WEAPON: M1 GARAND W/ SNIPER SCOPE
PRIMARY GRENADE: STICKY GRENADE
SECONDARY GRENADE: SMOKE GRENADE
PERK1: M2 FLAMETHROWER
PERK2: OVERKILL
PERK3: EXTREME CONDITIONING
VEHICLE PERK: GREASED BEARINGS

WHY: This is a jack-of-all-trades build, allowing me to dominate from short, medium, and long range. Having tools for every situation allows me to never give a competitive advantage to my opponents.

Jacob Thompson Production Coordinator at Activision

NAME OF LOADOUT: MONSTER
PRIMARY WEAPON: BROWNING M1919 W/ BIPOD
SECONDARY WEAPON: M1897 TRENCH GUN W/BAYONET
PRIMARY GRENADE: FRAG
SECONDARY GRENADE: TABUN GAS
PERK1: M2 FLAMETHROWER
PERK2: OVERKILL
PERK3: SECOND CHANCE
VEHICLE PERK: ORDNANCE TRAINING

WHY: This is the ultimate destruction class. You have a weapon for every scenario. The Browning will mow thru enemies at medium range and can be mounted for some long range sharpshooting. The Trench Gun will dominate close range along with the bayonet for super close range or sneak attacks. On top of that you have the M2 flamethrower, Tabun Gas, and Frag for extra chaos. Finally, if someone manages to take you down, Second Chance will give you one last gun to complete the madness.

Noah Heller Producer at Activision

NAME OF LOADOUT: PYROMANIAC
PRIMARY WEAPON: FG42 (WITH SCOPE)
SECONDARY WEAPON: NAMBU PISTOL
PRIMARY GRENADE: MOLOTOV COCKTAIL
SECONDARY GRENADE: FLARES
PERK1: M2 FLAMETHROWER
PERK2: SLEIGHT OF HAND
PERK3: FIREPROOF
VEHICLE PERK: LEADFOOT

WHY: FG42 helps you take them out at range, flamethrower for everything else. Sleight of Hand gets that flamethrower out quicker, and lets you throw Molotovs faster. Leadfoot for zooming around in maps—you shouldn't be in the vehicle, you should be burning it!

NAME OF LOADOUT: JACK OF ALL DEATH!
PRIMARY WEAPON: PTRS ANTI-TANK SNIPER RIFLE
PRIMARY WEAPON 2: DOUBLE-BARRELED SHOTGUN (SAWED-OFF)
SECONDARY WEAPON: .357 MAGNUM
PRIMARY GRENADE: FRAG GRENADES
SECONDARY GRENADE: TABUN NERVE GAS
PERK1: PRIMARY GRENADES X2
PERK2: OVERKILL
PERK3: MARTYRDOM
VEHICLE PERK: COAXIAL MACHINE GUN

WHY: This loadout is all about multiple ways to kill people! You have long range weapons, short range weapons, and everything in between. With *COD:WW,* having the right weapon type ready is even more important, which is why this loadout is killer!

NAME OF LOADOUT: TANK HUNTER
PRIMARY WEAPON: PPSH (APERTURE SIGHT)
SECONDARY WEAPON: COLT 1911
PRIMARY GRENADE: STICKY GRENADES
SECONDARY GRENADE: SMOKE GRENADES
PERK1: M9A1 BAZOOKA X2
PERK2: CAMOUFLAGE
PERK3: RECONNAISSANCE
VEHICLE PERK: ORDNANCE TRAINING

WHY: This is how we kill tanks! Don't be tempted by the Flak Jacket perk for this loadout, our goal here is that the tanks can never see us (Camouflage) and we always know where they are (Reconnaissance). Smoke grenades can help make their life hell while your team takes them down. Ordnance training ensures that you win tank vs. tank matchups.

Absolutely Deadly Death Card combos

The team behind *World at War* recommends trying out these unusual Death Card combos to spice up your co-op play experience. Tell us your personal favorites at **PTOM_Letters@futureus.com.**

THE LAWNMOWER:
SUICIDE KING + PAINKILLER
One player goes down, the other stays behind cover and shoots to revive him as they clear the level.

ULTRA REALISM:
VICTORY + BODY ARMOR + FLAK JACKET
God help you.

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA:
THUNDER + BODY ARMOR
If you have to hit 'em in the head, you might as well enjoy the fireworks.

B-MOVIE HORROR FEST:
UNDEAD SOLDIER + VAMPIRE + BERSERKER
For the campy B-movie lover in all of us.

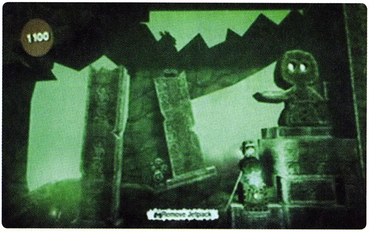
JOKER'S REVENGE:
STICKS & STONES + BERSERKER
Good luck unleashing the Berserker.

WAR CORRESPONDENT:
VICTORY + COLD DEAD HANDS + STICKS & STONES
For all of your video-capturing needs, turn off your HUD, weapon pick-ups, and first-person player weapon.

» BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

LITTLEBIGPLANETEERS

Insider tips and tricks behind PTOM's favorite original levels and the Sackpeople that created them...first up this month:

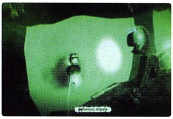


The broken columns and cool blue background make for a captivating world.

The Azure Palace

Last month, Media Molecule reviewed the *LittleBigPlanet* levels created by Qore host Veronica Belmont and GamesRadar.com's Mikel Reparaz, and beginning this month, PTOM will shift *our* critical eye towards user-created *LBP* levels! That's right, we'll be spotlighting our favorite levels to share with you, complete with insights and advice from the creators themselves. These levels will be among the most technically awesome, brilliantly creative, and all-round most fun stages available, so get to work on that amazing level you've been building in your *head* and maybe next month you'll see it showcased here!

Given all of the incredible work already populating the *LBP* servers, picking our first favorite wasn't exactly easy. But gevurah22's Azure Palace has already garnered a considerable amount of praise on the Web-o-sphere (with good reason), so we thought we'd give him a chance to be more than a name attached to a YouTube video. Plus, his level is absolutely stunning. Sophisticated puzzles, an epic boss—hell, it's even got multiple endings! Most impressive of all, though, is the level's creative and immersive aesthetic: a captivating underwater temple. But don't just take our word for it. Search for "The Azure Palace" (located near Florida) to experience it for yourself!



TIME SPENT MAKING LEVEL: About one full week.

INSPIRATION: *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* Water Temple, the new *Monster Hunter 3* underwater monsters, and a real underwater cemetery called the Neptune Society.

BIGGEST TECHNICAL HURDLES: Building the entire stage around jetpack control, making traps stay within theme, making sure everything didn't break because of the physics.

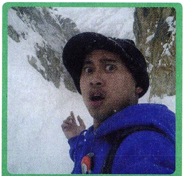
FAVORITE PART OF THE LEVEL: When you successfully get the key to the shrine and the king of the palace presents you with the Azure Blade. It's a little dramatic, but it was fun creating that set piece.

ANY DETAILS WE HAVEN'T NOTICED? The stage and design itself is pretty straightforward. There's nothing that's hidden if you reach the good ending.

OTHER COMMENTS: It's a pretty easy level once you figure out the subtle traps and how they operate. I had a good time creating the mood and atmosphere of the stage, which was something that wasn't present in the story mode. Plus, I'm really grateful for all the support The Azure Palace has received since it was published. Also, a big shout out to Neogaf, Gamefaqs, and LBPcentral!

OTHER PUBLISHED LEVELS: LittleBig-Phantasy Part 1

WORKING ON ANY NEW LEVELS? I'm currently working on a series called Mobile Suit Armorboy that focuses on some good ol' robot action. The gameplay is going to be similar to *Metal Warriors* back in the SNES days, so there will be a good mix of shooting and platforming. I mean, who doesn't like giant robots?

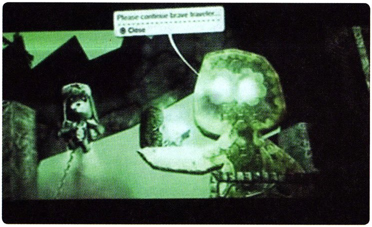


NAME: DAVID DINO
PSN ID: GEVURAH22
AGE: 27
LOCATION: AZUSA, CA
OCCUPATION: MEDICAL CONSULTANT

Do you have any desire to be a professional game designer?
It was something that was on my mind when I was younger, but I'm nowhere near that career track now. Unless someone is willing to hire me now!

ADVICE TO NEW LEVEL DESIGNERS: Patience and perseverance. It does take a while to master the ins and outs of the level creator, but it's definitely rewarding in the end. Also, don't make any more trophy or rocket car levels. There are way too many of them as it is. Finally, playtest your stages over and over again. I cannot stress that enough.

CAN YOU RECOMMEND ANY OTHER *LITTLEBIGPLANET* LEVELS OR DESIGNERS FOR EVERYONE TO CHECK OUT? I'd definitely recommend anything that comes from EarthMusic. His/her stuff is very well polished and has good visual design. Luckett_X has a very pretty series called Sackhouette that y'all should see, and whatever geosautus puts out next.



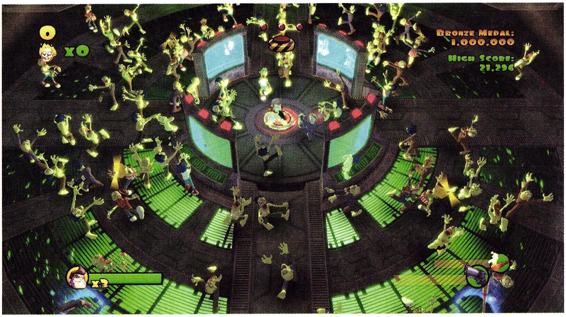
These crappy images are from a YouTube video. Find out why on page 92!

PlayStation Network Games

Downloadable games and add-ons for less than the price of a cricket bat. We say Yea or Nay.

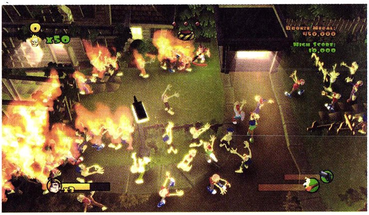
+ **YEA** You'll get full value for your money.

- **NAY** No legs, no fun, no value.



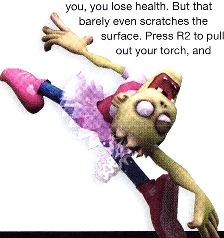
Burn Zombie Burn!

PRICE: $9.99 **DEVELOPER:** DOUBLE SIX



+ I'll be honest: I wasn't expecting much from a game titled *"Burn Zombie Burn!"* and at first I wasn't impressed. A top-down arcade shooter, where you play a short dude with a toothy grin and weird hair mowing down waves of zombies? Seemed like a half-hearted cash-in on society's zombie obsession. Plus, I'm not a fan of the game's art style. But then I dove into the complexities of the combat, and oh boy, I think I've found my *new* PSN obsession.

At first glance, the combat is simple. Left analog to move, R1 to fire, and if a zombie touches you, you lose health. But that barely even scratches the surface. Press R2 to pull out your torch, and the strategizing begins. Zombies are afraid of fire, so you can run through undead crowds unscathed if you've got your torch out. But once those zombies start burning, they'll do damage to you again. Also, each enflamed zombie adds one point to your multiplier, but killing burning zombies decreases your multiplier. *Plus* (yes, there's more!), burning and non-burning zombies drop different power-ups (including the TNT upgrades you need to earn insane scores), so determining when and how many zombies to burn requires a delicate, strategic balance to maximize score and survivability. Quite a juggle.



Add in the variety of weapon and enemy types (including a lawnmower, a cricket bat, and ballerina zombies), the three different modes (free, timed, and defend the girlfriend), the slew of entertaining challenges (like herding linebacker zombies across a zombie zapping pad), the splitscreen multiplier, and a few other neat tricks (I'll let you discover for yourself what the big red button does), and whew, this package will keep me entertained for months. Much like my first PSN love, *PixelJunk Monsters, Burn Zombie Burn* seems oh-so-simple at first glance, but once it pulls you in, it'll take months of practice to master. Teresa Dun

PowerUp Forever

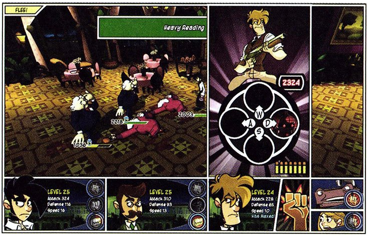
PRICE: $9.99
DEVELOPER: Blitz Arcade

- We wanted to love *PowerUp Forever*. We really did. The graphics are fantastic: a trippy universe that looks like swirls of paint smooshed between planes of glass, populated with an assortment of creepy, crawly critters. The concept is original: a shooter with no boundaries (hence, the "Forever" in the title), where you increase in size as you progress. When you're smaller, the bigger baddies simply ignore you, but as you grow, the world shrinks in comparison and suddenly those stationary monoliths spring to life and attack you. The gameplay is rock solid: a multidirectional 2D shooter with tight control. It all should've added up to a delightful downloadable diversion, yet it falls painfully short due to its repetitive and ultimately unsatisfying action. Once you play it for half an hour, you've basically seen it all, and you've got little reason to soldier on. If you love shooters and you enjoy zoning out during repetitive gameplay, give this a whirl. But if you're looking for something to engage you for more than a few hours—something with an actual sense of gameplay progression—*PowerUp Forever* will disappoint. Gary Steinman

On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness: Episode Two

PRICE: $14.99 **DEVELOPER:** HOTHEAD GAMES

+ Ah, how I miss old school point-and-click adventure games. I used to spend hours upon hours just reading zany descriptions, picking up random items like day old fish or paperweights, and trying to solve puzzles in my head before the game revealed all the clues. While *Episode Two* of the Penny Arcade game doesn't quite follow all the old school adventure game practices, it does reward you with humorous prose when you take time to inspect otherwise useless objects—a rare thing in the current marketplace of games and a design choice I appreciate. That's the strength of the game—it encourages you to slow down and explore as you encounter peculiar characters (like an ex-mime attending a science symposium), wacky settings (like a high-end neighborhood with gold-plated fire hydrants), and unexpected scenarios (like plucking flowers for a unfulfilled, middle-aged receptionist). But at the same time, the quick-paced, hands-off approach to leveling up characters and weapons infuses you with a satisfying sense of progression.



On the other hand, the combat is a bit tedious. It's turn-based, but you wait different amounts of time depending on whether you want to use an item (quick), do a normal attack (slow), or execute a Special or Team Attack (takes forever!). In other words: you do a lot of waiting! To keep you from twiddling your thumbs, battles involve a real-time blocking system (press R2 right before the enemy hits you) and mini-games to determine how much damage your Special Attacks hit for. It's all a bit monotonous yet never ostracizing.

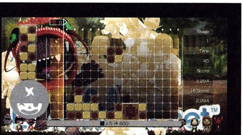
But when a game can still make me laugh after examining a 10th, normal-looking lamp-post, I'd say the lengthy battles are overshadowed by the sheer amount of detail poured into the game. One last warning: the game is rated Mature, and much of the language and themes are indeed vulgar. Teresa Dun

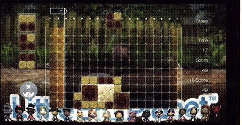
Coming Soon

LUMINES Supernova

AVAILABLE: Winter **DEVELOPER:** EPOS Game Studios

You know *Lumines* (the addictive and stylish little puzzler released for the PSP in 2005). You know *LittleBigPlanet*. And you know the PlayStation Network. Now the three entities are coming together in *LUMINES Supernova*. It's classic *Lumines* gameplay refined for a shiny, high definition television, and it'll be purchasable on the PlayStation Store. Not only will there be several alternative gameplay modes (including a new "Dig Down" mode where you have to "dig" to the bottom of the screen by deleting blocks), but the game will also feature various skins. And that's where LBP comes in. Yup, there will be a *LBP*-themed skin! Why, hello there, Sackboy…you look awfully *luminous* today.





Mirror's Edge downloadable Time Trial Map pack

AVAILABLE: February **DEVELOPER:** Dice

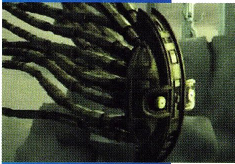
Seven new Time Trial maps, nine races, and zero cops. This $10 DLC, which focuses on agility, speed, and grace, ought to extend the *Mirror's Edge* experience for those who felt the main game a bit too short. Plus, lucky PS3 owners get a bonus map for free (ha, take that, Xbox 360!).

WHAT'S IN STORE

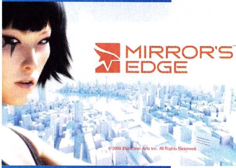
This month, free music seems the trend on the PlayStation Store. Here are some of the most recent offerings, in case you missed them.

STREET FIGHTER
UNDERGROUND REMIX
MUSIC

STREET FIGHTER
"Fighting in the Street" by Hieroglyphics
"Lay You Out" by Redman and Oh No
"Street Fighter Mix" by DJ Toure featuring Mistah FAB
"Super Beat Street Fighter II" by DJ Qbert
"Warrior Class Bounce" by Zion I



LINGER IN SHADOWS
Main Song
Menu Song
Credits Song



MIRROR'S EDGE
Theme Song

Letters

Feedback, insight, LittleBigControversy, and the Rhoadester

Out of context snippets from an email we won't be running (one from a "visceral" hating reader...you know who we're talking about):

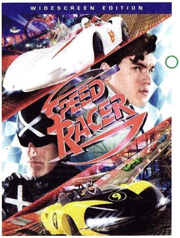
"It made me concerned for the well-being of your collective posterior."

"After the hot chocolate seeps in, it still sorta works. So I pry it apart and I get to see the thing that makes it vibrate and everything. But now it's broke."

"Would you advise I trade in my 2000 for a 3000? Or is it trivial?"

"Give my cynical black hole more!"

"If it hadn't been for you (oh how melodramatic), I might not have enjoyed *Street Kings, Master and Commander,* and *Speed Racer* (especially shocked at the quality of that one)."

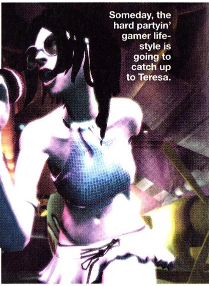


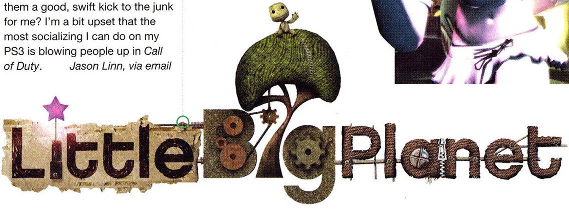
GO HOME

What the hell happened to PlayStation Home? Shouldn't I be walking around my virtual apartment trying out different fabric patterns on my sofa while admiring my collection of *Little Big Planet* and *Rock Band* Trophies about now? Has this thing been put forever on hold or did they scrap the entire project? Please tell me Sony hasn't given up on this. If they did scrap it, could you give them a good, swift kick to the junk for me? I'm a bit upset that the most socializing I can do on my PS3 is blowing people up in *Call of Duty*.

Jason Linn, via email

Home's open beta launched in December, so no, the project hasn't been scraped. In fact, it might even be out by time you read this! So no need to kick anyone anywhere, but do let us know how your sofa fabrics worked out.


Someday, the hard partyin' gamer lifestyle is going to catch up to Teresa.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

LITTLEBIGQUESTIONMARK

LittleBigPlanet makes me cry. Not because the gameplay sucks (it rocks!), but because my favorite *LittleBigPlanet* levels keep getting deleted for no reason whatsoever! Why?! Every time I add a level to my favorites, it seems to get moderated out the next day. Bad luck? Or is it me? It's getting really frustrating, so please, tell me why?!

Albert Martinez, via email

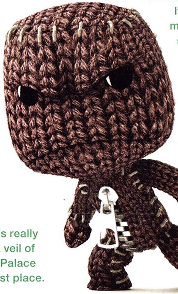
PTOM'S RESPONSE: We were wondering about that ourselves. Media Molecule remained mum when we asked them for some insight, so we approached David Dino (creator of the awesome Azure Palace *LBP* level that's been mysteriously removed... twice!) to see what he thought of the issue.

DAVID'S RESPONSE: It's really weird. I'm stuck behind a veil of secrecy as to why Azure Palace was taken down in the first place. Nothing in my stage violates the EULA as there are no IPs in it, mature content, etc.

A few weeks ago, my stage was brought back onto the servers after the story blew up on the Internet. Yet just this past weekend, my level was once again taken down (and still isn't up as of today). I wouldn't be surprised if it was some jerk just trying to take down levels by taking advantage of the poor moderation system. Of course, I'm not the only one this is happening to.

It becomes discouraging to others who make fantastic levels yet are afraid that someone might bring it down for the heck of it. Plus, the moderation staff does not seem to have a concrete system in place to inform a player of exactly why it was moderated, let alone a timeframe of when it might be back up.

I know Media Molecule is working hard to alleviate the issue, but they aren't giving the community a reason to feel secure, as the only update has been, "We're working on it." I love the game, but I don't want to put in "X" amount of hours into a stage only to have it be brought down because someone wanted to be a jerk.



The Jason Rhoades Column

Ever wonder what Scott's gonna look like when he hits middle age? Here's your answer.

We're not sure about you, but on Saturday mornings, we like to sleep in. You know, have a leisurely breakfast, maybe catch some Saturday morning cartoons or read a newspaper. But not Jason Rhoades. Oh no, that kid spends his Saturday mornings (one of them, at least) writing letters. To us. One after the other, they poured into our inbox. We were sort of impressed, sort of terrified, so here they are.

LETTER #1: Some features that I think would be nice

I love your magazine. It's the only one I pay for (others I just read in the store). But of course, there are some things that would make it a bit better, for me at any rate.

1) A dedicated *Rock Band* section, where you cover all of the *Rock Band* DLC!

2) A sales section. I see reports of hardware sales on the Internet, but they're never consistent. They skip weeks, even months, and sometimes they do Japanese sales one week, then European sales the next. It would be better if we could just see all the sales of PlayStation software and hardware for all regions.

3) A *LittleBigPlanet* section. I'd really like a place in each issue that could highlight the month for *LBP,* like featuring levels and whatever else you guys come up with.

4) Exclusive? Whenever you guys have an article on a game, you show what PlayStation system it is on. Add info on whether it's exclusive or not!

LETTER #2: Playfire

I don't know where the line is between "advertising" and "featuring" but I was wondering if you guys could take a look at the website www.playfire.com.

LETTER #3: Don't give in!

I saw three magazines in the last month that have folded. One of them was so they could go to a better and improved website. In my opinion, that is not better and improved. Nothing beats a magazine. The physical means of holding and reading is much better than a computer screen. Magazines just have more personality, with their aesthetic designs and quality articles. Please, don't give in or convert to the Internet!

By the way, I saw that you guys are ranked number four overall out of all the "Computer & Video Game Magazines and Strategy Guides" on Amazon.com. Very nice!

LETTER #4: Print time?

I was wondering when you guys start printing your magazine every month. You sometimes say "as of print time" but I have no idea when that is.

LETTER #5: Qore

I saw a couple of you on the newest Qore in the holiday guide. That was cool.

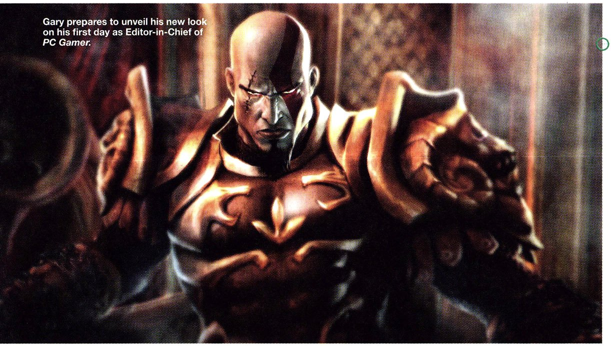
LETTER #6: The 2009 outlook

I'm pretty sure you guys are working on a massive synopsis of all the great games in 2009. I just want to make sure that none of the games I'm anticipating get left out. [And then he lists all the games he's looking forward to. Thanks for making our job easy, Jason!]

LETTER #7: Please Sony, take advantage of me

God of War III. To me this is more than a game. This is the reason I bought my PS3. And now with the glorified *God of War III* approaching, I am expecting a special edition that blows me away...me, and my wallet. Some call expensive special editions nothing more than taking advantage of the consumer, but please Sony, I want you guys to go all out with the special edition of *God of War III*. I mean like an authentic Pandora's box of goodies. Something that is truly special, and I will almost hypnotizingly buy it.

Thanks, Jason! Your dedication to us is a bit scary, but we hope the rest of the readers learned something from your example.


Gary prepares to unveil his new look on his first day as Editor-in-Chief of *PC Gamer.*

From the makers of PlayStation: The Official Magazine
2009 PLAYSTATION 3
CHEATER'S HANDBOOK
5001* CHEATS!
Tips, tricks, tactics and strategies for ALL the biggest games!
MIRROR'S EDGE
Everything the free-runner needs to know
GTA IV
50 things you never thought you'd do
METAL GEAR ONLINE
Detailed strategy for every map
Best Perks
Expert Co-op Tips
Every Trophy
Call of Duty: World at War
Resistance 2
Burnout Paradise
LittleBigPlanet level design tips
Future
PLUS Fallout 3 • Rock Band • Guitar Hero • Far Cry 2

EYEBROW FETISH?

Uneven eyebrows look sexy on Bayonetta! Then again, anything would look sexy on her. Only problem is, I don't own a PS3...yet. I used to have a PSP but an ugly fight with my girlfriend turned it into Helghast scraps. (I know what you're thinking but don't even say it, I hear it all the time and I'm still with her. After all, she paid for it!)

Swamy Aguilar, via email

We're trying really hard not to judge you, Swamy—really, really hard. We'll just say that hot women must be your weakness. We'd remind you that true beauty comes from the inside, but we don't think it'll do any good. Oh, and please, get a job!

WE STILL MAKE CHEATBOOKS!

Ever since you guys started working on your new mag, PTOM, there's only one thing I've really missed: The Codebook. Yeah! This nice book had many nice cheat codes, and it's helped me and other fans. So can you please start printing this book again? *Wael Al-Abri, via email*

How could you have missed it? It goes by a slightly different name, but our 2009 PlayStation 3 Cheater's Handbook is on shelves now! Go pick one up. You won't regret it! (And remember, we're the experts, so you have to believe us.)

RIOT INCITER

Everyone is always talking about how great *Final Fantasy VII* was. Well, you know what? I despise *FFVII*. It was long and boring! Stop talking about *FFVII!!!*

Ziltoid,via email

We're sorry you feel that way, but you don't want to be saying that too loudly amongst certain crowds, if you know what we mean. Especially considering the number of emails we get demanding *FFVII* remakes for the PlayStation store.

YUP, STILL CURING CANCER

I was wondering if you guys had a Folding@Home team (I'm assuming you do) and what the team number was? Unless, that is, you think you are too good for me to join you.

"Dipchit02," via email

Too good for you to join us? Never! Our team number is 57353. But honestly, we're a little surprised you had the gall to email us in the first place. Just who do you think you are, anyway? The nerve...

KIDS THESE DAYS

I need to know what these games for 2009 might be rated: *Killzone 2, Resistance: Retribution, White Knight Chronicles, Alpha Protocol,* and *Red Fraction: Guerilla.* I also want to know if there are any M-rated games that are not full of bad content or are appropriate for 12-year-old boys. Finally, are there any rated T-rated games that are as much fun as M-rated games? You know, blowing things up, open worlds, nice guns, etc.

Jacob Brenkus, Ohio

Are 12-year-olds considered teenagers these days? My, how times have changed. First of all, we recommend you stay away from Mature-rated games, at least for a few more years. In the meantime, enjoy *Quantum of Solace, Prince of Persia, Mirror's Edge, Spiderman: Web of Shadows,* or *Battlefield: Bad Company.* There should be enough guns and explosions in those games to keep you satisfied. You can also go to www.esrb.org for the latest rating info.

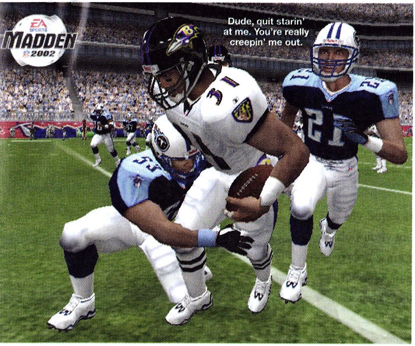
PSN LOVE

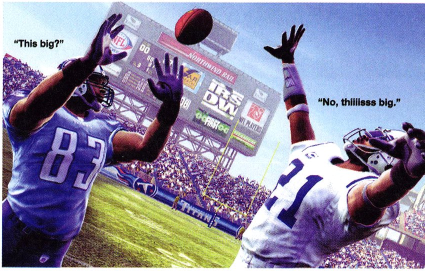
Give more than one page to PlayStation Network games. To me this is the shining star of the system. Great games (and some stinkers too, like *Jeopardy!)* for a lot less than a Blu-ray game. My favorite, *Fatal Inertia,* blows *WipEout HD* away! Why? Steering and better control!

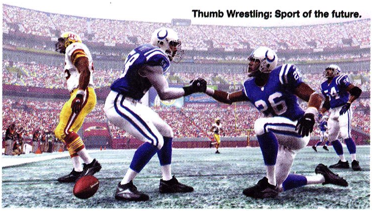
Everett Rantanen, via email

We hear you Everett, we love PSN games, too! And there are some great ones just around the corner, and it's amazing how varied there are. On the one hand, you've got something like *Flower,* which is shaping up to be more of an artistic, experiential encounter than a game. But on the other hand, you've got a multiplayer shooter like *Crash Commando*...and that's not even mentioning titles like *Flock* (an adorable little puzzler) or *Texas Cheat 'Em* (a "videogame" version of poker and not just the same old tabletop poker brought to a screen). But right now, PSN games are still overshadowed by the bigger blockbusters. But worry not, we will allot PSN games more space as needed!

contact Send your thoughts and comments to PTOM_letters@futureus.com. Because you loooooove us. Oh yes, you do.







FATHER AND SON

My son and I represent the perfect PS3/PS2 dynamic. I never graduated to the PS3 (far too many buttons for this old coot), so I'm on my 12th season of *NHL 04,* seventh season of *Madden 02,* and continually replaying old *Tomb Raider* levels on PS2. My son, meanwhile, is happily blasting away at his PS3 games like *Resistance 2* and has created about 14 teams for *Madden 09.*

While he loves his FPS and sports games, he misses platformers. He likes *Ratchet & Clank,* but once he got to the end, there wasn't another platformer to latch on to. It seems the PS3 has everything but a good stable of platform games. Are there any on the horizon?

"DCW," via email

First of all, we have to point out that the PS2 and PS3 controllers have the exact same number of buttons—you may not use the PS2 "analog" button as often as the PS3 "Home" button, but that's not the point! They still have the same number of buttons! If you're feeling intimidated by the fancy graphics and improved functionality, on the other hand, just come right out and tell us. We won't bite, and maybe we can even help you out. Second, for PS3 platformers, we recommend: *Prince of Persia, LittleBigPlanet,* and *Tomb Raider: Underworld.* They're not all platformers, but they should keep you and your son busy until the next *Ratchet* game!

RANDOM QUOTE FROM A CANADIAN EMAIL WE WON'T BE RUNNING

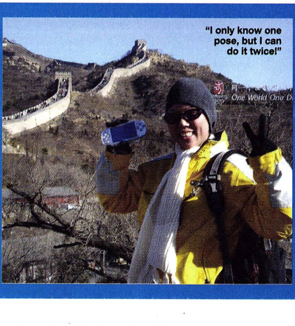
"Why don't you guys ever run full letters from Canadians? You always say "from a letter we won't be running." What do you have against Canadians, huh?!"

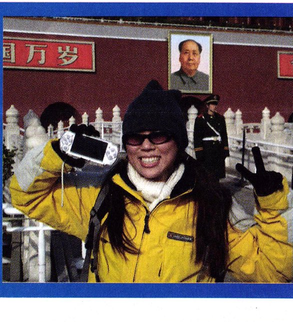
—CanuckYou92, via email

NI HAO FROM CHINA

I wanted to send you some pictures of me and my PSP's awesome trip to China! Last November, we left our sunny hometown of Los Angeles, California and traveled halfway across the world to Beijing, China where my trusty PSP and I ventured to monumental locations in the bitter freezing cold. With my PSP on my back, we walked across the historical Tiananmen Square and into the gorgeous Forbidden City. We also hiked a quarter mile up the bigger-than-life Great Wall of China. Overall, my PSP and I had an amazing trip.

Annie Ng, via email


"I only know one pose, but I can do it twice!"
One World One D



qore™

Presented by the PLAYSTATION®Network

Qore host Veronica Belmont

qore
DECEMBER 2008 Episode 07
SKATE 2
BACK ON BOARD AND GRINDING TOWARDS GREATNESS
BIONIC COMMANDO
FLOCK!
skate 2
Select

Qore Episode 07

DON'T MAKE ME POISON YOUR FOOD

Veronica Does *Voodoo*

QORE EPISODE 07

FREE FOR EVERYONE!

We know you PTOM fans are accustomed to your monthly Qore freebie, but we thought it would be fun (and a nice holiday treat) to give everyone a chance to see Episode 07 on the house. w00t!

Gleaming the Qube

Episode 07 begins with an inside look at EA's ***Skate 2,*** the sequel to the game that redefined what it means to ride a virtual board. Then, Audrey Cleo rolls over to **Skatefest '08** in San Diego for a spin around the boarding scene.

Capcom Twofer

Next, Veronica Belmont makes her way to **Capcom** to check out two of their latest projects—***Bionic Commando,*** the re-imagining of the classic 8-bit franchise, and ***Flock,*** a really cool **PlayStation Network** game that definitely does not follow the herd.

Steam Punk

We also introduce you to the **Steam Punk** sub-culture as we take a look at **Codemasters'** ***Damnation***—a post-modern third person-shooter served with a Jules Verne twist.

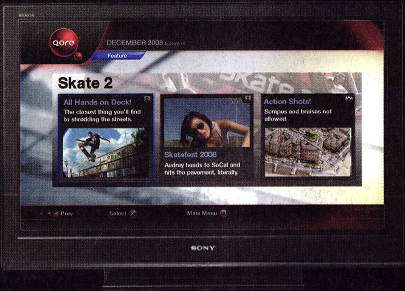
Of course, it wouldn't be Qore if we didn't have a few downloadable and playable goodies for you in the form of an exclusive ***Killzone 2*** **theme** and the latest addition to the ArQade—***Blast Qore.***

Annual Subscribers to Qore will find their **Download Centers** filled with a Qore-exclusive ***Flock*** demo.

And don't forget to check out the **What's Hot** section for Audrey Cleo's round-up of the top Blu-ray releases in December, and Veronica doing ***Voodoo*** in the Big Easy.

We hope you enjoy the holidays and get a chance to experience this very special episode of Qore!

Skate 2



qore

DECEMBER 2008 Episode 07

Feature

Skate 2

All Hands on Deck!

The closest thing you'll find to shredding the streets.

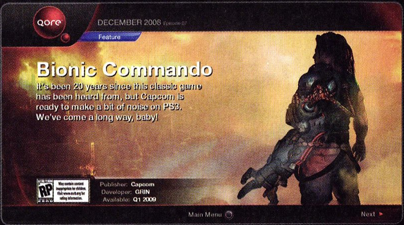
Skatefest 2008

Audrey heads to SoCal and hits the pavement, literally.

Action Shots!

Scrapes and bruises not allowed.

Bionic Commando



qore

DECEMBER 2008 Episode 07

Feature

Bionic Commando

It's been 20 years since this classic game has been heard from, but Capcom is ready to make a bit of noise on PS3. We've come a long way, baby!

RP May contain content inappropriate for children. Visit www.esrb.org for rating information.

Publisher: **Capcom**

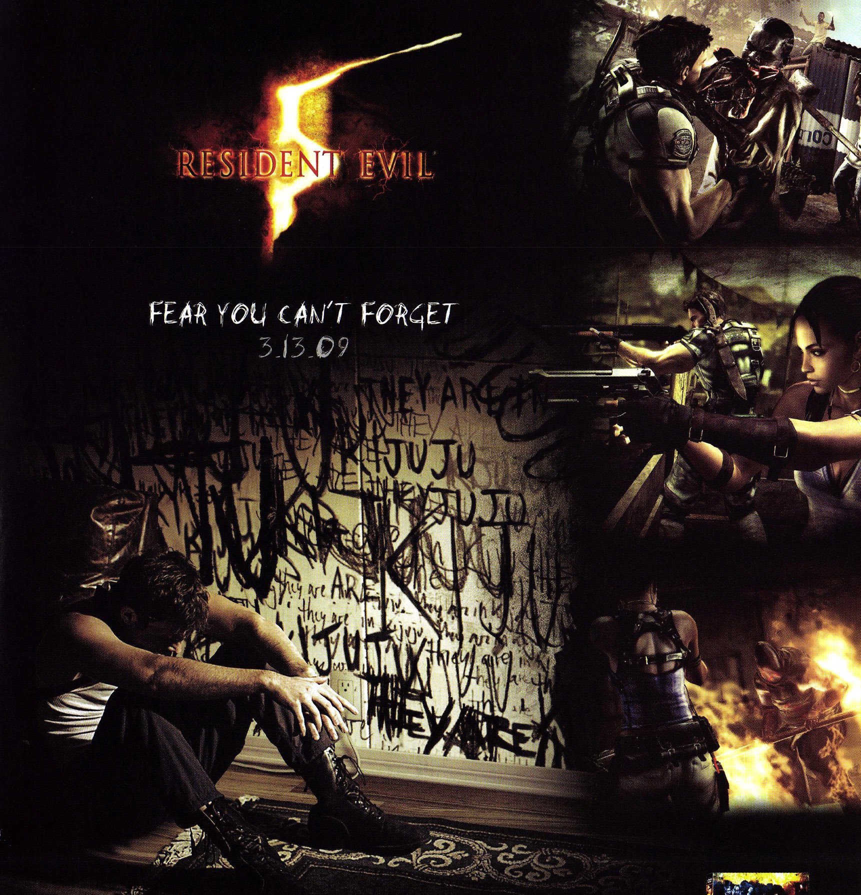
Developer: **GRIN**

Available: **Q1 2009**

Photograph by Mark Maceo

* PlayStation Network registration required. User responsible for Internet fees.

No Code Needed. Did we mention it's **FREE FOR EVERYONE!?**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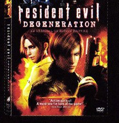
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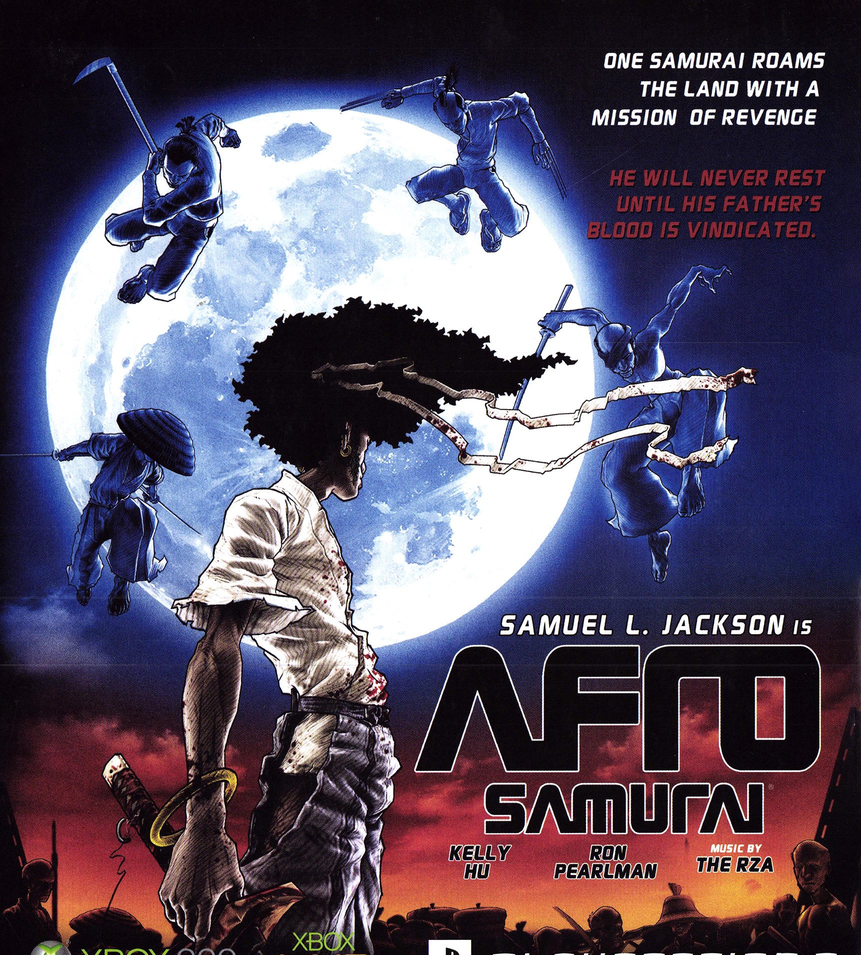
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